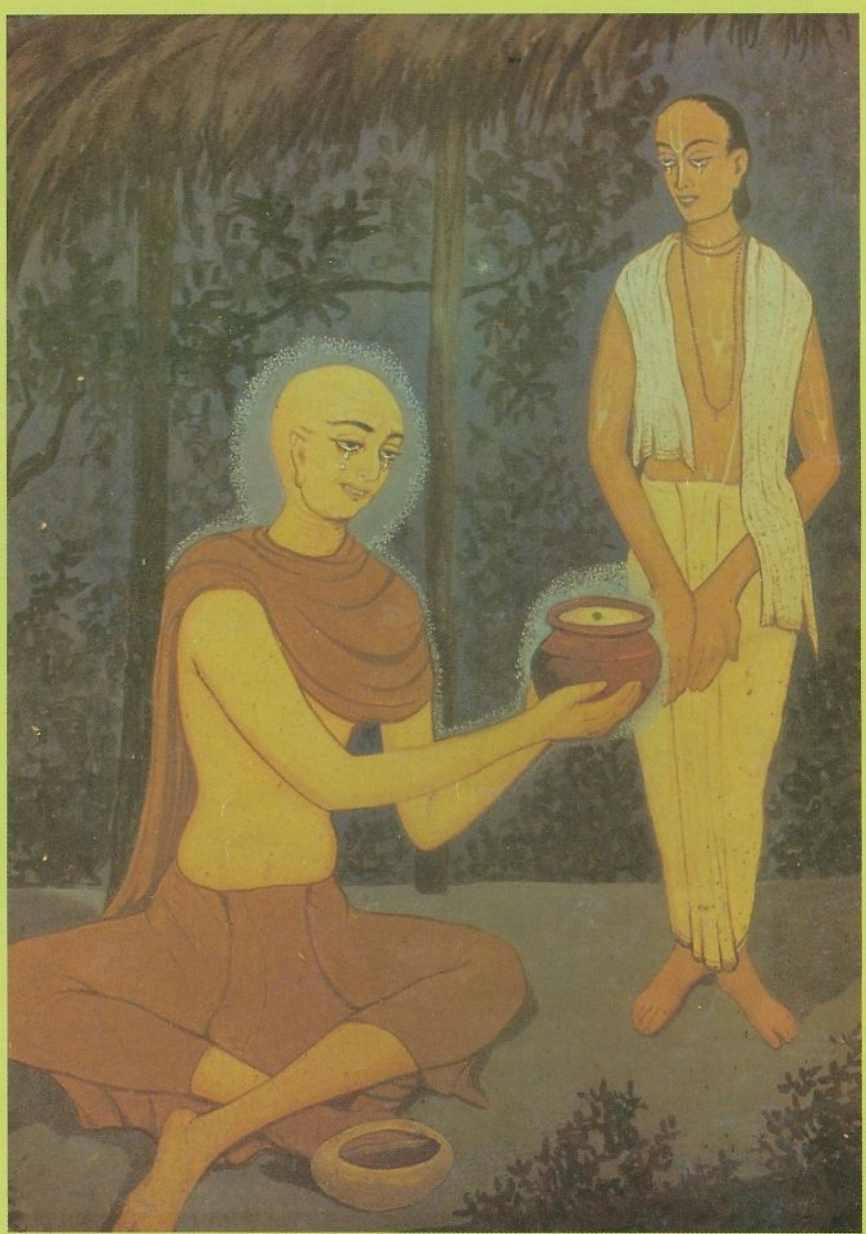
GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS. WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE.

BACK TO GODHEAD

MAY / JUNE 1994 • $4.00 / £2.50

A VISIT TO REMUNA

The place where God plays as a thief



PLUS:

Whose worship is idol worship?

Śrīla Prabhupāda in Washington, D.C.

Seeds of the Mahābhārata war

Cutting the knot in the heart

NEW FEATURE:

Hare Kṛṣṇa people
Profiles of devotees

Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva

At the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's center in Māyāpur, West Bengal, the Deity of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation, displays God's ferocious aspect. Devotees in Māyāpur will celebrate Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva's appearance on May 24. (The date may vary by one day for other locations.)

1944 50th 1994 Anniversary

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

Founded 1944 • Vol. 28, No. 3 • May/June 1994

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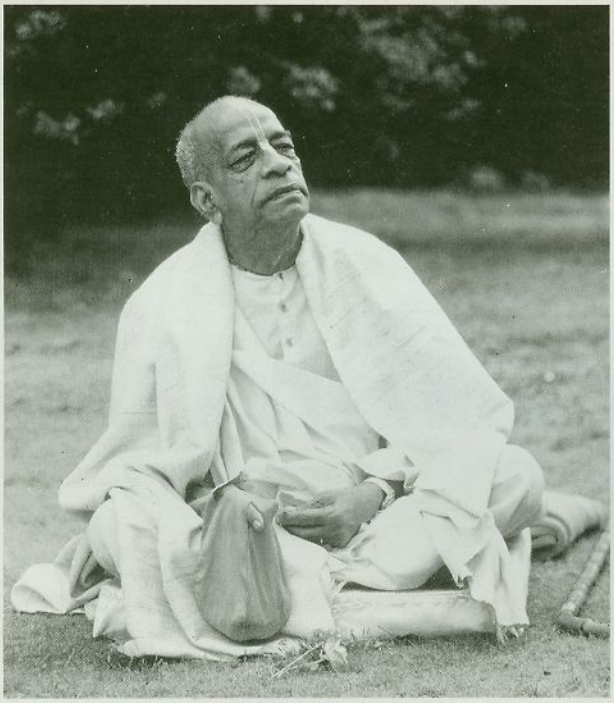
COVER: Śrī Mādhavendra Purī cries tears of ecstasy on receiving a pot of condensed milk that a Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa stole for him. The priest who delivered the condensed milk also cries, seeing the exalted state of Mādhavendra's Purī's love for Kṛṣṇa. Please see the article beginning on page 24. (Photo by Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa; artist unknown.)



His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-*Ācārya* of the
International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Statement of Purposes

Back to Godhead magazine is a cultural presentation to respiritualize human society. It aims at achieving the following purposes:

1. To help all people distinguish more clearly between reality and illusion, spirit and matter, the eternal and the temporary.
2. To present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as taught in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*
3. To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.
4. To offer guidance in the techniques of spiritual life.
5. To expose the faults of materialism.
6. To promote a balanced, natural way of life, informed by spiritual values.
7. To increase spiritual fellowship among all living beings, in relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
8. To perpetuate and spread the Vedic culture.
9. To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God through the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER
(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

SPIRITUAL NAMES Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa (Dāsī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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Why Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?

Here's a page full of reasons. I'll spare you the footnotes, but each reason is fully upheld by evidence from Vedic writings like Bhagavad-gītā, *the* Upaniṣads, *and the* Purāṇas.

CHANTING HARE KṚṢṆA awakens love of God.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa brings liberation as a side benefit along the way.

When you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you automatically develop knowledge and detachment.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa gets you out of the endless cycle of birth and death.

It is the most effective means of self-realization in the present Age of Quarrel. Nothing else works nearly as well.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa cleanses the heart of all illusions and misunderstandings.

By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, you become free from all anxieties.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa brings you to self-realization—and shows you how to act as a self-realized soul.

It keeps you ever mindful of Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure.

There are no hard and fast rules for chanting. You can chant anywhere, any time, under any circumstances.

Kṛṣṇa Himself is fully present in the transcendental sound of His name. And the more you chant, the more you realize it.

All other Vedic mantras are included in the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. So just by chanting this mantra, you get the benefit of all others.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa purifies not only you but every living entity around you. Whoever hears the chanting gets spiritual benefit.

A person who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa develops all good qualities.

You can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa softly for personal meditation or loudly with your family or friends. Both ways work.

Śrīla Prabhupāda chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, and so did great souls in the past. So why not you?

It's free. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa never costs you money.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa brings the highest states of ecstasy.

There are no previous qualifications needed for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Young or old, anyone can chant—from any race, any religion, or any country of the world.

Even if you don't understand the language of the mantra, it works anyway.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa brings relief from all miseries.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is easy. When the best way is also the easiest, why make life hard for yourself?

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa invokes spiritual peace—for you and for those around you.

When you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Himself becomes pleased.

When you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa dances on your tongue.

By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa you can return to Kṛṣṇa's world, the eternal abode of full happiness and knowledge.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa frees you from the reactions of all past karma. Chanting Kṛṣṇa's name even once, purely and sincerely, can free you from the reactions of more karma than you could possibly incur.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa counteracts the sinful atmosphere of Kali-yuga, the present Age of Hypocrisy and Quarrel.

By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa you can relish at every step the full nectar that's the real thirst of the soul.

The more you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, the better it gets.

If you look through all the Vedic scriptures, you'll find nothing higher than the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

—Jayādvaita Swami

Letters

Rejuvenated Mind
We in South Africa are trying very hard to scurry through the narrow doorway out of material nescience, and it is publications like *Back to Godhead* that help to advance our progress. Each time I open the pages of BTG my mind becomes rejuvenated by the clear illumination from this transcendental publication.

Pragasen Govender
Durban, South Africa

A Sublime Spiritual Expression
Your reply [in BTG Nov/Dec] to Mr. Vaishnavi's letter on the use of the words *Vedic* and *Vaiṣṇava* was well stated. Permit me to add a comment.

Inaugurating pure Vaiṣṇavism in the West and in India, Śrīla Prabhupāda unconventionally supplanted the term "Vaiṣṇavism" with a fresh, ingenious one: "Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Undburdened by knotty connotations, "Kṛṣṇa consciousness" is a sublimely intelligible spiritual expression."Kṛṣṇa consciousness" is impeccably Vaiṣṇava and Vedic and yet exceeds both.

Brahmānanda Dāsa
Berkeley, California

Don't Clean It Up—Toss It Out
I continue to enjoy *Back to Godhead;* it is very nicely done in both style and content, and it is of great help to me as an academic as I continue to develop my understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America and the world.

I'm particularly moved to write by the recent material on television and its infernal influence in our culture. I've lived in television-free homes for about eighteen years now, and have raised my children from birth without the one-eyed monster. I don't understand the people who want to clean up television; they should simply get rid of it altogether.

Timothy Miller
Associate Professor, Religious Studies
University of Kansas
Lawrence

Chanting Together
Thank you to Rohiṇīnandana's sharing of his chanting a round with his son every day (BTG Sept/Oct). Our eldest son had lapsed in his daily chanting, but now that we chant with him, his regulation is restored. As a result, we are more consciously addressing how to associate with our growing children.

Heena and Paul Oliver
Nottingham, U.K.

Can Kṛṣṇa's Avatāra Come Now?
Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that He appears in every millennium in His original transcendental form, whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise of irreligion. So does that mean there's every possibility that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa will appear in the present day and age, when irreligion is very much in vogue?

It is true that the Lord is here as His holy names and that the holy names and the Lord are nondifferent. But the *Gītā* says Kṛṣṇa appears *Himself,* millennium after millennium. So can Kṛṣṇa appear now and rectify the wretched state this world is in, once and for all?

Sāmba Dāsa
Baltimore, Maryland

OUR REPLY: Although Kṛṣṇa can no doubt come whenever He likes, He chooses to come on schedule. He does this so that followers of the *Vedas* can verify that it is Kṛṣṇa who has come, and not some imposter. When Lord Caitanya taught Sanātana Gosvāmī about the *avatāras,* He stressed that an *avatāra* must be mentioned in the scriptures. This protects people from being cheated by bogus so-called *avatāras.*

You admit that in the present age, Kali-yuga, Kṛṣṇa comes as His name, but still you want Kṛṣṇa *Himself* to come. But since there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name, His name *is* Himself. *Kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa avatāra:* In the Age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa Himself descends in the form of His holy name. So we have only to take shelter of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and then we will know we are being protected by Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Just What We Don't Need
I am thirteen years old, and my mother gets BTG. I look at it when she gets it, and I skim some of the articles sometimes. I've seen Vraja Kishor Dāsa's articles several times, and every single time I've been repulsed by them.

What really surprises me is that he has a rock band. Rock 'n' roll and Hare Kṛṣṇa don't mix. They're at different ends of the scale. I constantly hear people say "Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll." On the other hand, "Celibacy, chanting, and rock 'n' roll" has never been said.

As with the name of Jesus, great things have been done in Prabhupāda's name. And of course bad things are done in his name as well. I think Vraja Kishor's writing is one of them. He preaches intolerance, like the Nazis and the Klan, just that he doesn't ask the reader to go out and lynch a few "karmis" (well, not directly anyway).

More intolerance is just what we don't need in this world, where the Bosnians, Serbs, and Muslims try to kill each other, where the Israelis exile the Palestinians, where Hussein bombs the Kurds, where the Hindus battle with the Muslims, and where race riots break out yearly in major cities from Boston to Los Angeles.

When we can all get along well enough to keep from fighting over which football team will win the Super Bowl, then Vraja Kishor can step in and perfect humanity to his specifications. Until then, he can work on perfecting himself.

Mahārāṇī Dāsī
Brunswick, Maine

VRAJA KISHOR DĀSA REPLIES: Mahārāṇī has accurately pointed out my faults. I beg to offer her my humble obeisances, in an attempt to avoid an overwhelming impulse to defend my ego. Offenses to devotees cause the greatest misery. So I ask her forgiveness for any disturbance caused by my writing. And I hope this forced display of humility doesn't offend her even more.

The dualistic idea that "rock" and

Hare Kṛṣṇa are unmixable directly contradicts the judicious opinion of a long line of ISKCON leaders, *sannyāsīs,* and spiritual masters, who include my own dear spiritual master, Śrīla Dhanurdhara Swami. And Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says: *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ/ nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate.* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.255)

In other words (English words), any material thing (even rock 'n' roll) can be spiritualized by being engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service under the guidance of senior devotees. *This* rock 'n' roll causes thousands of people to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and shun illicit sex.

"Celibacy, chanting, and rock 'n' roll." It's been said, and it's being done.

Intolerance: I am open to her criticism, but if one practices tolerance of ignorance, he or she will become painfully familiar with the repeated sufferings of the material world. The previous *ācāryas* (teachers) were boldly intolerant of ignorance. I should like to follow their example.

Although practicing intolerance of ignorance, I try my best to be very tolerant toward *people.* I try to be friendly and maintain a service mood toward everyone, regardless of their beliefs or habits. So I hope no one is reading my articles and getting psyched up to go drop bombs on karmis and all that yucky stuff.

I doubt anyone is.

A Great Inspiration in the Heart

I was crying while reading those letters from Russian devotees in the last issue. I was also laughing in happiness because in my country, Russia, people know about Kṛṣṇa now, thanks to our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda. Those letters caused a great inspiration in my heart.

Inga Kossoroukova
Vancouver, Canada

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OUR ONLY DUTY

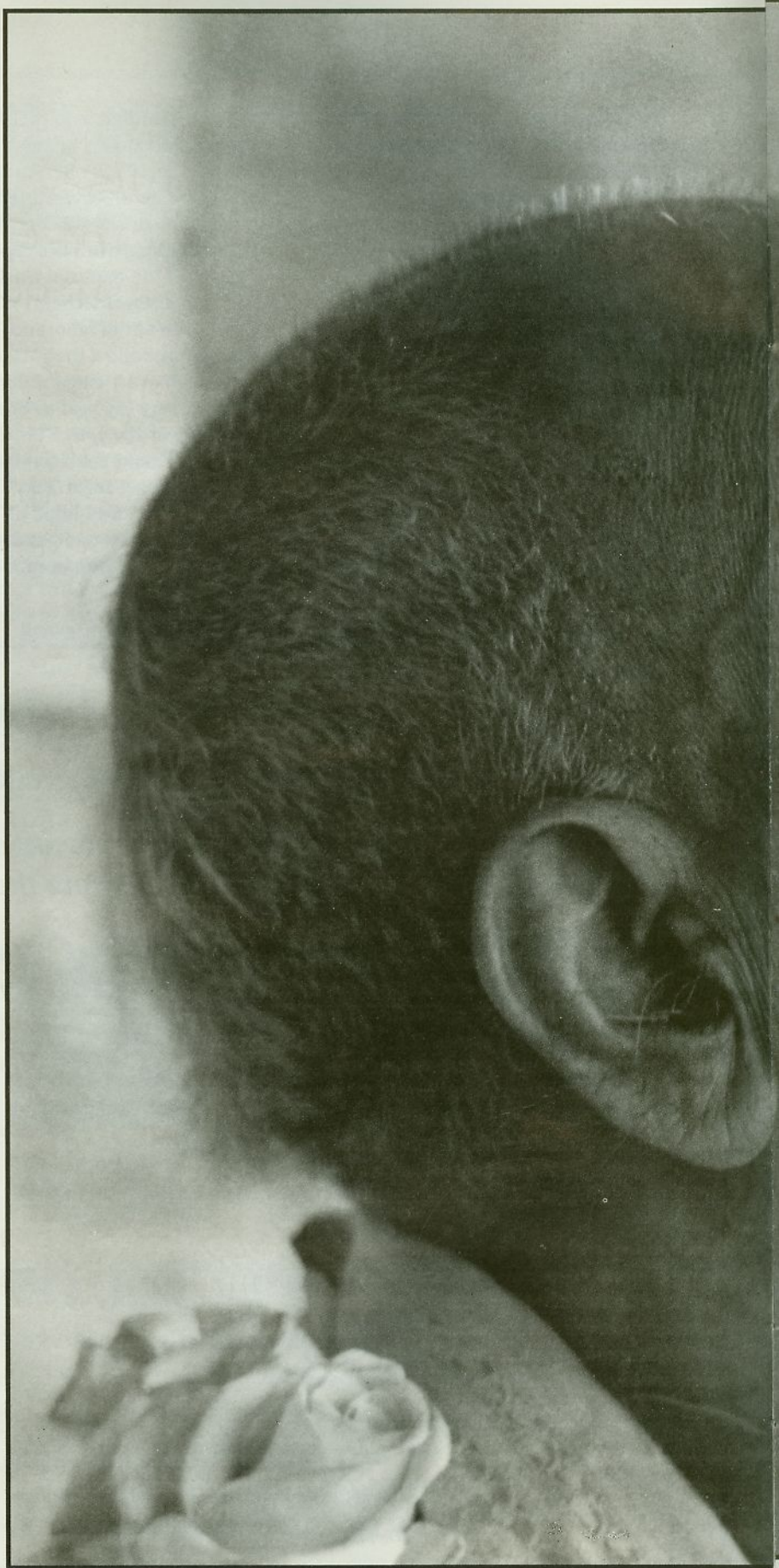
The Vedic literature is filled with injunctions, but one stands supreme.

• • •

A lecture given in New York, January 7, 1966

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

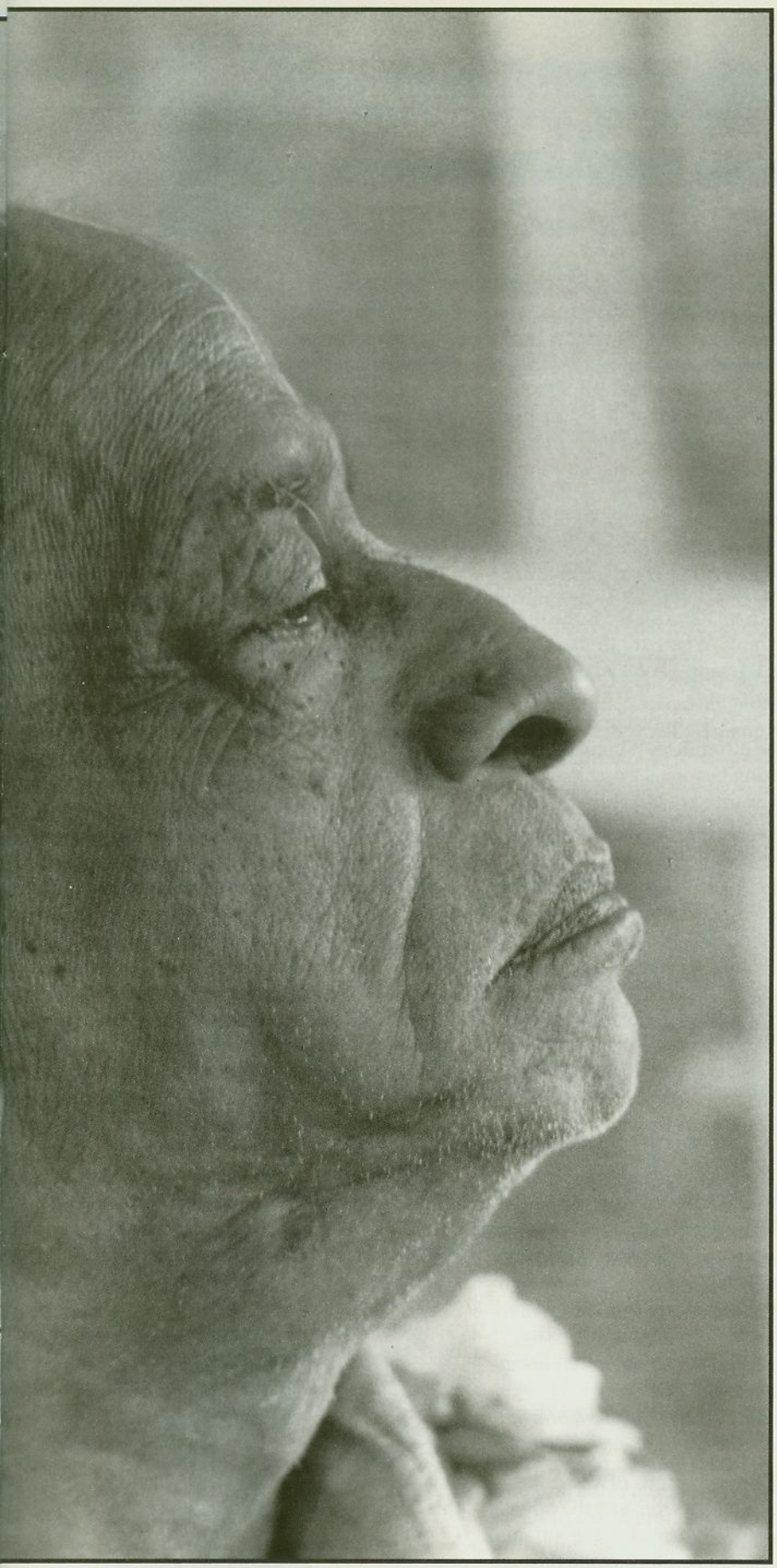


kṛṣṇa-bhakti—abhidheya, sarva-śāstre kaya
ataeva muni-gaṇa kariyāche niścaya

"A human being's activities should be centered only on devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is the verdict of all Vedic literature, and all saintly people have ascertained this."
—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 22.5

WE HAVE JUST STUDIED the constitutional position of Kṛṣṇa—His original standing as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His expansions and incarnations, and how He is situated as the supreme controller of the spiritual and material manifestations. As far as possible, we have learned about Kṛṣṇa through the grace of Lord Caitanya.

Even Brahmā, the primal living entity within the material world, cannot know everything



about Kṛṣṇa. Brahmā is a living entity like us, but he is supremely powerful within the material universe. Just as President Johnson is the supreme power in this country even though he is a man like us, Brahmā, although a living entity like us, is exalted as the supreme personality within the material world by his meritorious and devotional service to the Lord. But he is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. *Ekalā īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya:* Only Kṛṣṇa is the master, and everyone else, however great he may be, is Kṛṣṇa's servant.

Even Kṛṣṇa's expansion Viṣṇu is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa. The greatest manifestation of Viṣṇu is Mahā-Viṣṇu, lying on the Causal Ocean of material creation. The material universes emanate from His breathing. This gigantic form of Viṣṇu, with four hands, is mentioned in the *Brahma-saṁhitā:*

yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam athāvalambya
jīvanti loma-vilajā jagad-aṇḍa-nāthāḥ
viṣṇur mahān sa iha yasya kalā viśeṣo
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ
bhajāmi

"I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda. A portion of His plenary part is Mahā-Viṣṇu." And what is that Mahā-Viṣṇu? "With His breathing, all the universes come into existence and are annihilated." That is His breathing. With our breathing we take in and exhale many germs. Mahā-Viṣṇu exhales and inhales many universes. And Mahā-Viṣṇu is a plenary expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

If we want to have a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, how can that be achieved? That is now being explained by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The process of executing service by which we can attain our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called *abhidheya. Abhidheya* means "execution of obligation." You may sometimes avoid duty and be excused, but you cannot avoid obligation. Obligation means something you have to do. Because you are meant for that thing, if you do not do it you will be in difficulty.

Our obligation as living entities is to serve the Supreme. We are part and parcel of the Supreme, just as the hand is part of the body. If I feel some itching, at once my hand comes, without my asking for it. The arrangement is so made that as soon as I feel some itching, the hand comes. That is obligation. Similarly, because we are part and parcel of the Supreme, we have an obligation to serve the Supreme,

If you serve an ordinary person here, you get your maintenance; you get your wages. Are you so foolish to think that if you serve Kṛṣṇa He will not maintain you?

• • •

Kṛṣṇa. If we are not doing that, our position is like that of a hand cut off from the body. My hand cut off from my body will not come to cure my itching. That means it is fallen. Its business is finished.

If the hand does not work under the obligation it has—to serve the body—then it is understood to be paralyzed, diseased, or infected. A doctor sometimes advises, "Cut it off. If you want to save the other parts of your body, then cut it off."

Similarly, conditioned souls are now cut off from their original relationship with Kṛṣṇa. They are forgetful. Our duty is to serve God. There is no other duty. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's preaching: "You have no other duty. To think you have other duties is illusion. If you have selected any other duty than to serve Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then you are foolish. You are doing something wrong; it is not for your interest." This is the teaching of Lord Caitanya, and of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also.

Somebody may argue, "Oh, if I completely engage myself in the service of Kṛṣṇa, then how shall I live in the material world? Who will take care of my maintenance?"

That is foolishness. If you serve an ordinary person here, you get your maintenance; you get your wages. Are you so foolish to think that if you serve Kṛṣṇa He will not maintain you? Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā, yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham:* "I personally take charge of your maintenance." Why don't you believe it? If I serve some master here, he pays me wages—"Take your wages"—$25, $10, or whatever it may be. And I am going to serve the Supreme and there is no maintenance for me? Oh, what foolishness! That is called forgetfulness.

That is the spell of *māyā,* illusion. *Māyā* will dictate, "Oh, you are going to serve Kṛṣṇa? How will you maintain yourself, you foolish person. Don't go there. Don't go to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society. It is cheating."

No, it is not cheating. It is factual. But if you want to gratify your senses, oh, there is no scope here for that. For that you can go to hell. But if you want to serve Kṛṣṇa, there is every arrangement for you here.

If you want to cheat Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa will also cheat you. Kṛṣṇa says, *dyūtaṁ chalayatām asmi:* "Amongst all cheating processes, I am gambling." Where has cheating come from? Cheating is in Kṛṣṇa because He is the origin of everything. Whatever there is, even cheating, thieving—what is condemned in this world—that is also in Kṛṣṇa. But in Kṛṣṇa it is without contamination. That is the difference. When He cheats, His cheating becomes worshipable.

Kṛṣṇa wanted to cheat Droṇācārya. That story is in the *Mahābhārata.* Kṛṣṇa asked Yudhiṣṭhira, "Just go and lie to Droṇācārya. Tell him, 'Your son is dead.' " Don't you think Kṛṣṇa was trying to cheat? So there is cheating in God. Everything is there, but in full. God is good; therefore His cheating is good. His thieving is good. Everything about Him is absolute. Unless you understand this point about the Absolute Truth, you cannot understand Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya is now teaching how to make progress in the execution of devotional service, *abhidheya.* The next verse states:

śrutir mātā pṛṣṭā diśati bhavad-
ārādhana-vidhiṁ
yathā mātur vāṇī smṛtir api tathā vakti
bhaginī
purāṇādyā ye vā sahaja-nivahās te tad-
anugā
ataḥ satyaṁ jñātaṁ murahara bhavān
eva śaraṇam

There are two kinds of Vedic literature. One is called *śruti,* and the other is called *smṛti. Śruti* means the original Vedic injunctions, which come through disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa down to this day. The Vedic injunctions are axiomatic truths. For example, it is a Vedic injunction that cow dung is pure. Now, your reason may cause you to say, "Oh, you say there is a Vedic injunction that if you touch the stool of any animal you have to take your bath to purify yourself. And another Vedic injunction says that cow dung is pure. This is contradictory."

No, not contradictory. These are Vedic injunctions. People who accept them without argument are benefited. How are these injunctions true? You may not have sufficient intelligence, but if you go deep into the matter you will find they are true. That is the nature of Vedic injunctions.

So you cannot argue about them. You have to accept them as they are. You cannot interpret them. What education, what intelligence do we have that we can interpret Vedic injunctions? They should be accepted as is. That is the meaning of *śruti.* You simply have to hear and act accordingly.

If you are a learned scholar in the Vedic injunctions, if you have heard from the bona fide souls, and if you are convinced, then you can write something that corroborates the Vedic injunctions. That writing is called *smṛti.* You cannot write nonsense. You cannot manufacture anything. You should always remember, "I am a tiny brain here, so I have to receive knowledge from superior sources." Then if you can expand whatever knowledge you have received, your writing is called *smṛti.*

This *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* written by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya, is *smṛti.* Why? Everything written here corroborates the Vedic literature. There is no suggestion that "I am a philosopher. I am a speculator. I think this will be like this." Here you'll see in every step that Caitanya Mahāprabhu is quoting from

(*please turn to page 62*)

The Hard Knot in the Heart

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA speaks strongly in his purports about the attraction between men and women and how this attraction can devastate spiritual life. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "Material existence means living together as male and female and being attracted by one another. However, when one fully understands spiritual life, his attraction for the opposite sex becomes vanquished. By such attraction, one becomes overly attached to this material world. It is a hard knot within the heart." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.29.85, purport)

In marriage that knot becomes especially strong, and people are not eager to be advised what to do about it. Sometimes people criticize the *ācārya* (Vedic teacher) by saying, "Why are you meddling in our private lives? You *sādhus* have your own business—worship, preaching, and so on. What business is it of yours what we do in the privacy of our marriage?"

There was an article called "Bishops in the Bedroom," written by lay Catholics. They were criticizing their priests, saying, "We don't want you involved in our sex life." And "pro-choice" women, even more adamantly, don't want any moralists, religionists, or politicians telling them what they can or can't do with their bodies.

Materialists fiercely protect what they see as their right to engage freely in sex life. As Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "In all species of life the attraction between male and female is the basic principle of existence."

It is a fact that the *ācāryas* are completely aloof from married life and its implications. They are aloof from the whole material world. Yet they are concerned. One time an elderly British man was inquiring from Śrīla Prabhupāda. The man admitted he didn't know much about Kṛṣṇa consciousness—but he was interested in hearing. After some talk about transmigration, the man said, "It seems to me that you are free by your spiritual development and that you didn't have to come back. It seems you have come back because you wanted to, because you have a job to do."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's answer was matter of fact. "Yes, just like Kṛṣṇa. He comes, or sometimes Kṛṣṇa's son comes, a great devotee, because the spiritual enlightenment of the fallen souls is required." That is why saintly persons who have nothing to do with sex life and its entanglements—home, land, children, and money—instruct the attached householders.

From the attraction between man and woman, everything else grows. "Everyone comes to this material world attracted to sense gratification, and the hard knot of sense gratification is the attraction between male and female. By this attraction, one becomes overly attached to the material world in terms of *gṛha-kṣetra-suta-āpta-vitta*—that is, home, land, children, friends, money, and so forth. Thus one becomes entangled in the bodily conception of 'I' and 'mine.' "

The consciousness of "I" and "mine" directly correlates with sins like abortion. Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained that both the abortionist and the mother who chooses abortion will have to take birth again and again to suffer the same fate as the baby they have killed. Therefore, to try and save at least a few people from the horrible suffering awaiting them, the compassionate devotee preaches.

The great devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja also describes the knot that forms in the heart due to sexual attraction. In modern culture, sexual partners consider marriage optional, but in Vedic culture the attraction would always be regulated by marriage. But marriage makes the knot stronger, especially as children are born and one struggles to maintain the family. When one works hard to support his children, he wants to be respected by them, and by his co-workers. This tightens the knot of attachment. Devotees want to loosen this knot.

Married or single, we all have experience of this hard knot. Even if we ourselves have not tied a marital knot, we have all been children of our parents. I know that during my entire childhood I never once entertained the idea that I was anything but the son of my parents. My world rotated on the axis of my parents. Not until I was seventeen years old did I begin to disagree with their world view or their view of me. Then began the struggle we all go through of trying to become free of our parents' ideas and find our own identities.

Even after I left home and was living my own life, I still held to an image of myself as part of my family. I remember that when I met Śrīla Prabhupāda—I was already twenty-six years old—I called my parents to tell them the wonderful news. I even sent them our *ISKCON Prospectus* and told them how happy I was now that I had found something I could dedicate my life to.

They got angry. This wasn't their religion. How dare I do something different? My father even told me, "If you stay with the Swami, we won't have anything more to do with you."

I knew he wasn't bluffing. Although they were sentimental about their sense gratification, when their sacred codes of identity were challenged they responded strongly.

After that phone call, I went upstairs to see Prabhupāda. I started crying as I related what had hap-

pened: "They told me that if I stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness they won't have anything to do with me anymore."

Prabhupāda didn't seem to take it too seriously. He didn't lecture me about family attachment. He just looked at me, his eyes smiling.

I lost those parents, but in such a way that I accepted Śrīla Prabhupāda as my father, my real father. Later I wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda to confirm this. He wrote back, "You have accepted me as father, so I have accepted you as my dear and real son. Relationship of father and son on the spiritual platform is real and eternal. On the material platform such a relationship is ephemeral and temporary." He added, "Although I cannot give you anything as father, still I can pray to Kṛṣṇa for your more and more advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

I was free, but only years later did I understand what I had gotten free from. One day I was distributing *Back to Godhead* magazines at Harvard Square. I looked around at so many conditioned souls, and I could see what family illusion was. I knew I wasn't completely free of it myself, but what impressed me was how strong it is. Although it's complete illusion, it's almost impossible to escape. To identify yourself as a spiritual soul with your own unique relationship with Kṛṣṇa is difficult when you are surrounded by family members, especially materialistic family members. The hard knot of family affection is considered the biggest obstacle to spiritual life. But when one fully understands spiritual life, the illusion is vanquished.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami travels extensively to speak and write about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is the author of more than two dozen books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

LORD KṚṢṆA'S CUISINE

COOKING CLASS: LESSON THIRTEEN

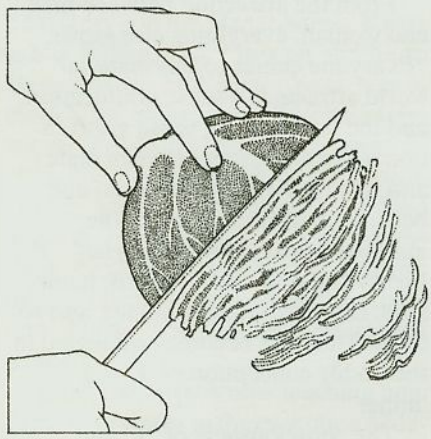
Śāk—Leafy Green Vegetables

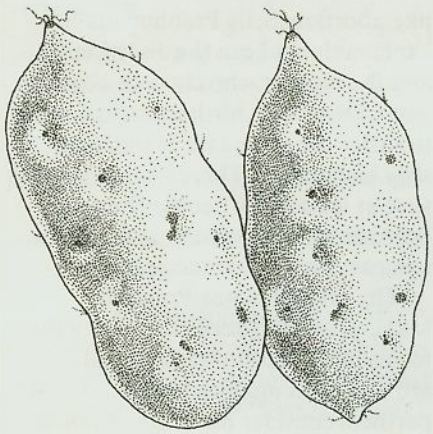
by Yamuna Devi

MANY KIDS PUSH leafy green vegetables around the plate and eat them last, if at all. I was one of those kids in the 40s and 50s. Spinach, the most frequent offering those days, was likely served in a cheesy cream sauce to pass muster with most family members. Other leafy green vegetables were virtually nonexistent on the table. Even after leaving home, in my early years exploring Kṛṣṇa conscious cooking, I tended to ignore other greens and make only spinach-based sautés.

Fortunately, my repertoire has expanded considerably, and when possible I prepare a different type of leafy green dish daily. My first stop in the produce section is to eye the best greens, sometimes planning meals on availability. My basket is often half filled with a variety of crisp, brightly colored green leaves.

Green dishes are one of the most exciting aspects of classical Indian vegetarian cooking, loved as much today as they were centuries ago. Greens, including the tops of root vegetables, the leaves of cabbages and grapevines, and in warm climates the fifty-plus species grown especially for tender leaves, constitute the basis of a group of dishes called *śāk*. The popularity of *śāk* is only limited by seasonal availability, with flavors ranging from sweet to pleasantly bitter, and textures ranging from purées to textured sautés. Fortunately, many greens traditionally used in Indian kitchens are widely available in the West. Kale, spinach, escarole, mustard greens, collard greens, radish greens, and green and red Swiss chard fill most produce aisles.





Śāk in the Vaiṣṇava Kitchen

Śāk has a wonderful history in Vaiṣṇava kitchens. It is mentioned in Vedic scriptures and in Bengali prayers and is offered to Deities daily in large temples. It was one of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's favorite dishes. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* in describing Lord Caitanya's trip from Jagannātha Purī to Vṛndāvana through the vast Jharikanda forest, says that Lord Caitanya's servant, Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya, would collect all kinds of forest greens and

Kale and Yams With Currants

2 large bunches kale
1 yam or sweet potato (about 8 oz.)
1–2 teaspoons ghee or unrefined corn oil
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
½ teaspoon fennel seeds
1 jalapeño chili
fresh juice of 1 orange
½ cup water
2 tablespoons currants or raisins
salt and pepper

Wash the kale and remove the stems and coarse veins from the leaves; chop the leaves coarse. Peel and dice the yam or sweet potato. Heat the ghee or oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan over moderately high heat. Add the mustard and fennel seeds and toast them until the mustard seeds pop. Add the chili, orange juice, yam, and water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, add the currants or raisins, cover partially, and cook until the yam is ¾ tender and the liquid is almost gone, about 15 minutes. Add the greens and cook them until the leaves wilt and the color intensifies (4 or 5 minutes). Season with salt and pepper and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

edible shoots and roots, and with only a few spices and oil would prepare delicious *śāk* for the Lord. Lord Caitanya's devotees, knowing His fondness for this simple food, would invariably offer it as part of His meals. The Bengali song *Bhaja Bhakata Vatsala* mentions *śāk* in describing a long line of dishes Kṛṣṇa eats at noon in Vṛndāvana.

Preparation and Storage

As with all vegetables, the closer to harvest the better. If possible, buy locally grown unpacked greens so you can easily detect yellow or wilted leaves. Thick leaves have a longer storage life than do fragile ones, so kale keeps a day or two longer than spinach. If you must store greens, refrigerate them unwashed in a moist muslin bag for one to three days.

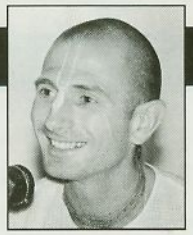
Since dirt and sand cling easily in the nooks and crannies of unwashed leaves, you have to wash the leaves well before use. Half fill a large bowl or sink with cool water, and then add the leaves and swish them to loosen sand or mud. Remove the leaves and repeat the operation two or three times, or until all traces of dirt are off the leaves. Sometimes you'll have to wash each leaf individually. Avoid superficial rinsing in a colander—it's pretty useless.

You will likely want to remove all tough stems and keep them for stock or the like. To do this, fold each leaf in half, glossy side in. Grasp the thick stem at the base of the leaf and pull it off toward the tip, removing not only the central core but also coarse veins in the leaves. Depending on the dish, the leaves are now ready for shredding, chopping, stuffing, layering, or other uses.

Assignment

If you follow the class series, prepare three or four dishes from the class textbook, *Lord Krishna's Cuisine.* To further note how seasoning affects the flavor of greens, steam one or more varieties and simply sprinkle them with one or two kinds of pan-toasted spice seeds and barely drizzle them with a distinctive oil for more flavor. For newcomers to greens, I highly recommend the above dish; it is easy and elegant.

Yamuna Devi is the author of the award-winning cookbooks Lord Krishna's Cuisine; The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking *and* Yamuna's Table. *She is a regular contributor to* The Washington Post *and* Vegetarian Times. *You can write to her in care of* Back to Godhead.



BHAKTI-YOGA AT HOME

"Always Remember Kṛṣṇa . . .

by Rohiṇīnandana Dāsa

AND NEVER forget Him." So states the most important instruction of the *Vedas.* All other rules and regulations simply serve to assist this one basic principle.

Thinking of Kṛṣṇa is as natural as thinking of our own self. Despite our involvement with a multiplicity of things in this world, we always retain a sense of self. Even when we are in love and absorbed in thoughts of another, our absorption is in relationship to our self—*my* friend or *my* lover.

Now that we've come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we've learned that our self is spiritual and that we are parts of the Supreme Self, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Our selfhood and our very existence are inseparable from Kṛṣṇa, and we are dependent on Him, as a ray of sunshine is dependent on the sun.

Not only is Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Self; He is also the supreme beloved. When the people of Vṛndāvana—who possess nothing dearer than Kṛṣṇa—thought Him to be fatally enwrapped

in the coils of the serpent Kāliya, they saw the whole world, including themselves, as vacant and useless.

We may now be far from the Vṛndāvana plane of existence, yet we can begin to sense our exclusive dependence on Kṛṣṇa and our inherent love for Him. The air, the life-giving sun, the sweet taste of water, the timeless bird-song, our food, and our ability to digest it are all Kṛṣṇa. As His energies, all the features of the material world are nondifferent from Him. Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He takes care of us at every moment and at every step of our lives, no matter who we may be or where we may happen to roam.

In a natural, healthy state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness a person never forgets Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa has never forgotten and will never forget any one of us, any more than a loving parent could ever forget his child's welfare and happiness.

We can end our present sleep of forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa and ourselves by hearing and chanting about the Lord—His names, qualities, and activities. This simple method is so powerful it can elevate one quickly to the spiritual platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We can learn, as Śrīla Prabhupāda says, to mold our lives in such a way that we will always remember Kṛṣṇa and always find ourselves awake and alive rather than asleep in the struggle for illusory survival.

The Vedic scriptures advise us to "somehow or other" remember Kṛṣṇa. At first, we may think of Him as an order supplier, or we may have an improper understanding of who He is, or we may be afraid of Him or even envious of Him. But because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, no matter how we think of Him we will benefit, just as, regardless of our opinion of fire, if we put our hand near it we'll feel its heat. Śrīla Prabhupāda once said that an alcoholic could make spiritual advancement if he thought of the sweet taste of his wine as Kṛṣṇa.

Of course, as we progress spiritually we'll learn to think and act more and more favorably for the development of our pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That means we'll try to please the Lord with our every thought, word, and deed. Our remembering Kṛṣṇa "somehow or other" will develop into remembering Kṛṣṇa with love.

We can add Kṛṣṇa to our lives in numerous and perhaps numberless ways, some of which I am trying to outline in the Bhakti-yoga at Home column. One way I haven't mentioned thus far, but which I have found of great value to me over the years, is listening to tapes. Tape players let us use Kali-yuga technology to make up for the poor memories Kali-yuga has given us. We have a chance to hear a pure devotee such as Śrīla Prabhupāda, not once but over and over again, whenever it is convenient for us. And if we find it hard to sit down and hear, we can turn on the tape machine when we sit in our car, when we cook, or when we do repetitive things such as bathing, dressing, or hanging up the washing. If we can get in a half hour or an hour of hearing every day, our minds and intellects will be stimulated with spiritual topics throughout the day.

We can also increase our remembrance of Kṛṣṇa by trying to see Him everywhere. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa gives us many hints how to do this. In fact, just remembering Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions—as Arjuna did when Kṛṣṇa disappeared from external vision—is a way to associate with the Lord. If we find it hard to think of the original form of Kṛṣṇa, we can think of His universal form. As described in the Second Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* we can meditate on the universe as a huge body with mountains for bones; trees and clouds for hair, rivers for veins; oceans for an abdomen; wind for breath; the sun and moon for eyes; and passing ages for movement. Or, as the *Gītā* describes, we may choose to contemplate the nature of matter and spirit.

Whatever our disposition, we can find a way to practice Kṛṣṇa's conclusion: "A true yogi observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the Supreme Lord, everywhere." And the result? Kṛṣṇa says that for such a person, "I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." (Bg. 6.29–30)

Rohiṇīnandana Dāsa lives in southern England with his wife and their three children. Write to him in care of BTG.

THE LAND, THE COWS, AND KṚṢṆA

How Long Can Modern Agriculture Feed Us?

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

I'M WRITING THIS ARTICLE just after the U.S. government has approved a substance likely to send thousands of cows to the slaughterhouse, drive thousands of family farms out of business, and expose thousands of consumers to potentially dangerous antibiotics. Naturally, that's not the way the U.S. government sees the substance. They see it as a technological breakthrough that will boost profits for dairy farmers and offer big payoffs for biotech investors.

I'm talking about the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of bovine somatotropin—BST for short—a genetically engineered drug that increases cows' milk production

by ten to twenty-five percent.

What's wrong with cows giving more milk? I'll explain that, but first a few words about what's wrong with BST itself.

Drugs in Your Milk

Some people worry that BST could be carried by milk to milk drinkers, though so far the evidence doesn't support that fear. A more important health danger, explained in a report from the General Accounting Office to the U.S. Congress,[1] is that higher milk production will lead to more cases of cow mastitis, and the antibiotics used to treat the mastitis might get into the milk.

One more problem with BST is that fear of milk contamination may keep people from drinking milk, which is valuable for developing spiritual intelligence. (See "Is Milk for Everyone?" BTG, Mar/Apr 1993.)

Adding to a Surplus

Now for the problems caused by cows giving more milk.

The U.S. already has a surplus of milk. A drug that boosts production will favor farmers with large herds, and squeeze farmers with smaller herds out of business.

Say I'm a Wisconsin farmer with 100 cows; using BST is like adding 20 cows to my herd. But Farmer Jones from California has 1,000 cows, and using BST is like adding 200 cows to his herd. Because his operating costs per cow are smaller than mine, he can still make money when milk prices drop. I'll be forced out of business.

Government price supports complicate things a bit, but this is the net effect. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin stated, "I am deeply concerned about the future of small family dairy farmers in Wisconsin and around the country. This product is going to accelerate the process that is already resulting in thousands of family farmers being forced off their land."[2] Of course, when farmers are forced off the land, their cows will be sent to slaughter. It's alarming to consider that in some areas market competition could practically wipe cows out.

New Taxes for Agriculture?

BST is in many ways typical of a long list of challenges facing farming that make me wonder just how much longer modern agriculture will be able

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So far, there are no wind-powered or nuclear-powered tractors. A solar battery big enough to power a heavy tractor would probably sink it into the mud.

• • •

to feed us. In the case of BST, for example, let's follow its use a few years down the road: Smaller herds like those in Wisconsin and New England will be phased out, and larger herds, like those in California and Texas, will grow. But both California and Texas have water shortages. What will happen to cows if those states slap a hefty water tax on farmers a few years from now? Cows can't produce milk without water.

Another impending tax problem for farmers is the carbon emission tax likely to come. Modern agriculture gets about ninety percent of its energy from fossil fuel. It also relies on fossil fuel to make fertilizer and hundreds of miles of plastic-sheet mulch for vegetables. And, of course, fossil fuel carries agricultural products over land, air, and sea.

Not surprisingly, one economic model by the USDA[3] shows that anything that pushes up the price of fossil fuels will have a higher impact on agriculture than on most other industries, which can switch to nuclear power, hydro-power, and so on. So far, there are no wind-powered or nuclear-powered tractors. A solar battery big enough to power a heavy tractor would probably sink it into the mud.

And Fewer Subsidies and Loans

Another problem for industrial agriculture is that it stands to lose the money it was getting from the government when the government had money. Several nations feel they can no longer afford large subsidies to farmers, or they are entering trade agreements that prohibit them. For example, in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial (May 26, 1993) entitled "Deficit Reduction Made Easy," Harvard economics professor Robert Barro recommends fourteen cuts to balance the U.S. deficit. Heading the list is "Farm-income stabilization (various subsidies and credits to farmers): $19.2 billion."

In October *The New York Times* ran a three-part series on large-scale abuses to the U.S. government system that supports agricultural trade. The *Times* followed the series with an editorial blasting a system that "enrich [es] a small group of wealthy growers . . . and multinational corporations."

Most likely financial pressures will bring a dramatic shift for farmers of industrialized countries. For example, the U. S. Department of Agriculture is considering dropping the Farmers Home Administration (FHA), its multi-billion-dollar lending arm.[4] That means farmers will have to turn to their banks for the credit government used to provide. But according to *Hoard's Dairyman* (Nov. 1993), new banking reforms curb agricultural lending: "Record bank failures during the late 1980s chilled the banking industry and led the Federal Reserve to enact tougher banking regulations . . . Like it or not, credit is the lifeblood of a thriving agriculture. But we don't like what we see going on in ag lending."

"Enough Oil to Float a Battleship"

U.S. agriculture faces other shortages besides water and money. The USDA predicts that by the year 2000 the U.S. will be a net importer of potash, phosphorus, and ammonium —the three main ingredients in commercial fertilizer.

And what about the petroleum we talked about before? Petroleum from the U.S. stands to become more expensive. In a report submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Energy, the National Petroleum Council says that the oil industry could spend at least $166 billion over twenty years to comply with existing and expected environmental regulations.[5]

So oil companies will focus on developing foreign oil fields. Though new oil fields make more oil available, depending on someone else's petroleum can present a government with unpredictable strategic challenges. This was brought home to me lately when a friend commented, "Well, you don't have to worry about running out of oil now—they've got enough oil in Kazakhstan to float a battleship."

His imagery sounded ominous to me. It's true many oil fields are being developed around the world. Just read the headlines—"Texaco Gets Aid to Invest in Russia," "Norwegian Production Predicted to Surge in 1994," "Oil Giants Skittish about China Field," "Mobil Returns to Vietnam." But if the food supply depends on these foreign resources, my question is, Which battleship will my children be on to defend these investments when international relationships turn sour? Even if our kids aren't directly fighting, oil wars can hurt us all by driving up oil prices, which can cripple agriculture.

Environmental Challenges

The carbon emissions taxes I mentioned are meant to reduce global warming by so-called "greenhouse gases." But global industry may still send lots of those newly discovered oil reserves into the atmosphere. Environmentalists say that global warming may cause weather shifts that could make current agricultural patterns impossible. This has major implications for commercial-scale agriculture.

Other environmental challenges for agriculture include soil erosion, water shortages, and water pollution by manure, pesticides, and fertilizers.

Besides natural pollution, technology causes social pollution by forcing farmers off the land. In an article in *The Calcutta Telegraph,* Suryatirtha Ray concludes, "Having ruined both jobs and the soil, industrial agriculture is fast becoming economically unviable."[6] Ironically, agriculture's technological advancement is contributing to its own demise.

Politics and Trade

Global politics and economic trade agreements present more challenges for agriculture. For example, in today's paper I see a photo captioned, "Demonstrators trying to break barricades yesterday near the headquarters of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in Geneva. Farmers from Europe, India and Japan protested the trade accord, saying it would ruin hundreds of million of farmers and uproot centuries-old traditions."[7]

Three thousand farmers demonstrated against the GATT, and several hundred of them fought with police. Protests like this point to impending social disruption that even the farmers themselves are aware of.

Politics and Technology

Dependence on modern technology, such as petroleum-powered tractors, implies dependence on politics. Like trade, sophisticated technologies exist within the context of complex international political relations. People are at the mercy of those who control the flow of resources. If international relations turn against a country, the country may no longer be able to rely on tractors, built and powered by resources from several different countries. Cuba provides an example of this vulnerability.

Technology is at risk with national politics as well. If agriculture depends on technology, we will be faced with massive food shortages when the political structure collapses. The tractors won't keep going by themselves without the political structure to make it possible to build, trade, and power them. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.8.7), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Eventually the state will not be able to collect taxes and consequently will not be able to meet its huge military and administrative expenses. Everything will collapse, and there will be chaos and disturbance all over the state." Those remarks, which Prabhupāda wrote in 1974, are no longer just a possible prophecy. They are coming to pass right now, starting with the former Soviet Union and other countries.

Until society is organized on the principles given by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* there is scarcely any alternative to things getting worse and worse. And agriculture will be among the first and hardest hit sectors of society.

The Need for Sacrifice

Why is modern agriculture in such a state of crisis? Because its progress rests on materialistic principles, which are ultimately not sustainable. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.18.7), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "A huge arrangement exists for the production of large-scale industrial and agricultural products, but all these products are meant for sense gratification. Therefore, despite such productive capacities there is scarcity because the world's population is full of thieves."

Prabhupāda goes on to explain, "One is mistaken if he thinks that by applying modern machines such as tractors, grains can be produced. If one goes to a desert and uses a tractor, there is still no possibility of producing grains. We may adopt various means, but it is essential to know that the planet earth will stop producing grains if sacrifices are not performed."

The key to understanding the proper development of agriculture lies in understanding the Lord's

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• • •

purpose in putting the fallen souls in the material world:

> The material creation by the Lord . . . is a chance offered to the conditioned souls to come back home — back to Godhead. . . . The Lord created this material world to enable the conditioned souls to learn how to perform *yajñas* (sacrifices) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu [the Supreme Lord] so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety and after finishing the present material body they can enter into the kingdom of God.
> (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 3.10, purport)

Kṛṣṇa recommends three kinds of sacrifice: offering our food to Him before we eat it, performing our daily work for His sake, and chanting His holy names. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13), Kṛṣṇa says, "The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin."

Then He says, "All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of *yajña* [sacrifice], and *yajña* is born of prescribed duties." Prabhupāda outlines the process:

> Ultimately we have to depend on the production of the field and not on the production of big factories. The field production is due to sufficient rains from the sky, and such rains are controlled by demigods like Indra, sun, moon, etc., and they are all servants of the Lord. The Lord can be satisfied by sacrifices; therefore, one who cannot perform them will find himself in scarcity—that is the law of nature. *Yajña,* specifically the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* (chanting the names of the Lord) prescribed for this age, must therefore be performed to save us at least from scarcity of food supply.
> (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 3.14, purport)

Is Kṛṣṇa's Advice Practical?

Some people may question whether these three sacrifices—offering our food to Kṛṣṇa, doing our work for His sake, and chanting His holy names—can solve the problems faced by modern agriculture. The answer is yes, if people perform the sacrifices in a genuine mood of humility, with a sincere desire to carry out the will of the Lord. Then they'll naturally do things that will solve the problems of agriculture. For example, devotees of Kṛṣṇa don't eat meat. This one act stops violence, environmental damage, and agricultural overconsumption. Since Kṛṣṇa loves the cows, a society striving to please Him will offer Him milk from protected cows, and grains produced and transported by protected oxen.

Practically speaking, if all society adopted this standard, modern commercial agriculture would end. Small family farms depending on ox power would more easily lend themselves to sustainability and conscientious stewardship of the land. Those farms would give young people the chance to engage themselves productively and creatively in work everyone would appreciate.

Millions of small farms dedicated to pleasing the Supreme Lord would end the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few gambling stock investors and ensure that everyone could produce food to offer the Lord. Eating that food after it is offered to Kṛṣṇa would mean the end of hunger.

In contrast, the fatal flaw of modern commercial agriculture is that it is based on materialistic principles of sense gratification, with no reference to the desires of the Supreme Lord. It is doomed to collapse sooner or later, annihilated by its short-sighted, selfish policies. It is part of a culture with a deathly attraction for technology and the thrill of speculative investment profits.

The short-sighted, self-destructive mentality that creates and promotes a product like BST is all too typical of commercial agriculture. So I ask, How long can modern agriculture feed us? As long as farmers can get their loans? As long as there's no major oil war? As long as modern agriculture doesn't completely ruin the environment? As long as the country we're in stays politically powerful?

Can modern agriculture meet the growing challenges it faces? Will it feed my children? My grandchildren? Possibly—but I don't want to bet their lives on it.

Recently my eleven-year-old son told me he wants to learn to work the oxen this summer. I see that as a better hope. Of course, someone could ask, How long can Kṛṣṇa conscious agriculture sustain him? The answer is pretty simple: As long as he depends on Kṛṣṇa.

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Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī, an ISKCON devotee since 1978, is co-editor of the newsletter Hare Kṛṣṇa Rural Life.

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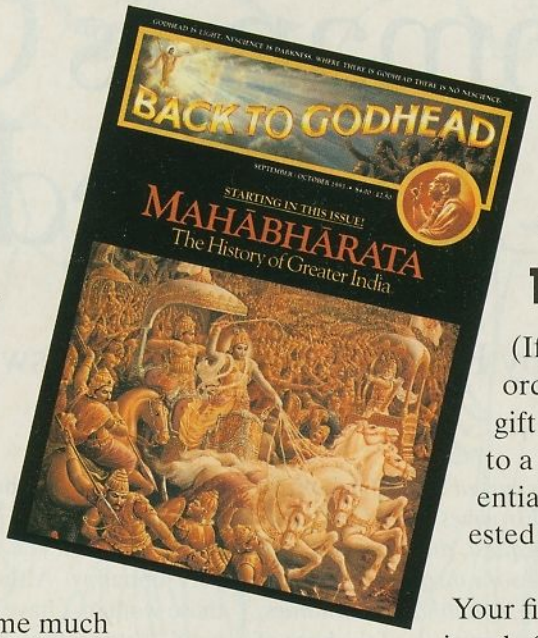

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Stepping Out

by Urmilā Devī Dāsī

STUDENTS LOOK forward to—field trips! They're a chance to learn by direct experience, a chance to apply or expand what one has learned in the classroom or at home.

Actually, whenever Kṛṣṇa conscious adults take their children or students out, in effect we take them on a learning field trip. By going with adults, children can learn how to deal with the world in practical errands, how to tell others about Kṛṣṇa consciousness when opportunities arise, and how to act properly in public as devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Every Saturday evening (unless it pours) our family and our live-in students go into the local college town with a group of devotees to chant and introduce people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our twelve-year-old son, Keśava, sometimes walks up to strangers with popcorn and an invitation to a temple program. Other times he runs and jumps with other boys as the sound of Kṛṣṇa's name, paced to drums and cymbals, dominates the atmosphere.

Naturally, we're all dressed traditionally as devotees—saris for women and girls, dhotis for men and boys. The *tilaka* that marks our bodies as Viṣṇu's temples stands out on our foreheads. Beads made from *tulasī* wood decorate our necks like jewelry. The children are learning to display proudly the signs of Kṛṣṇa's servant.

When we leave the chanting party, the sound of the cymbals still competes with the noise of traffic and people for a block or so. Still dressed as devotees, we head for the food market, where we act as ordinary citizens who choose and buy groceries. Then on we go to the department store, or the hardware store, or maybe we buy gasoline. At every stop our children learn to feel comfortable openly representing the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

As the evening moves on, the younger children become silly and need reminders—"You're representing Kṛṣṇa! We have to behave like yogis, who control their senses. Let's attract people to Kṛṣṇa by our example."

"What beautiful clothes!" an elderly woman in Wal-Mart remarked to our teenage girls. Our daughter, Yamunā, and her friends invited her to the temple, gave her a book, and talked to her about Kṛṣṇa.

Our grown son, Mādhava, sold a book to a man standing behind us in the check-out line.

Every shopping trip, our children learn how to select the best foods to offer the Lord. They learn how to calculate the cost of purchases and how much change they're supposed to get back. They learn how to plan their time. And they constantly learn how to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I remember a former student now approaching adulthood as a serious devotee. Soon after he enrolled in our *gurukula* at age eleven, he joined our annual field trip to the Ann Arbor (Michigan) Art Fair, where the local ISKCON center had a book booth. Our *gurukula* students would chant and distribute books, but he would do neither. Sitting as far under the shade of a tree as possible without merging into the trunk, he sought to avoid the eyes of all.

"What's the problem?" I asked the next day.

"I don't like people staring at me. Some of them laugh. I feel really uncomfortable. I'd rather just go in public dressed like everyone else. I don't like it!"

"What do you think people say or think when they see you?" I asked.

"Baggy Pants" at the Mall

I HAVEN'T BEEN a devotee for a long time—just a year. So the first time I heard we were going out in public for shopping, I asked Mother Urmilā whether I should change into pants from my *dhotī* and *kurtā*. When she told me we were going in *dhotīs* and *saris*, I freaked out! What would people think when they saw a teenage boy wearing a white "skirt" and with "mud" on his forehead?

When we reached the mall, I made sure I was the last person out of the van. I followed the devotees, crouching as low as possible so as not to attract attention from the devotees or the nondevotees. I listened for sounds of laughter and criticism but didn't hear any.

After gathering up enough courage, I slowly picked my head up. Nope—no one was laughing yet. The devotees looked like any other normal American people going shopping, except for the attire. The confidence with which they walked past the shops made me feel at ease.

I thought, "What is the worst thing people could do? Stare at me or laugh at me? Staring doesn't bother me; I like attention. And if they laugh, I'll laugh with them. I love laughing."

So I relaxed. After all, baggy pants were the latest fashion. You sure couldn't get baggier than a *dhotī*! It's not what you wear; it's how you wear it—with confidence.

—Prajwal Kalfe, age 15

" 'There's a Hare Kṛṣṇa.' Maybe, 'There's a weird Hare Kṛṣṇa.' "

"Maybe that'll be the only time in their life they say or think of the Lord's holy name," I said. "That might get them a human body next life, or a chance for devotional service. It's hard to get people to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. The magic of dressing as we do is that when people see us they chant and think of Kṛṣṇa without feeling we're forcing them or bothering them. And when they see that we're pleasant—even saintly—they naturally become interested in our philosophy and way of life. It's such a simple way to spread love for Kṛṣṇa!"

"But I feel, well, embarrassed."

"That's your austerity. Don't you think Kṛṣṇa will be pleased that you can tolerate some trouble or dishonor to spread His glories? And by pleasing Him you'll feel so much happiness you won't care what others think."

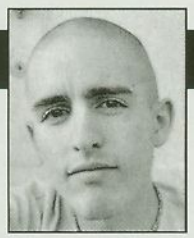
Gradually the student became more confident. He found, like all of us who've adopted an attitude of not caring so much what others think, that we have to be tolerant. All but a few people come to appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.

Sometimes our school goes on a major excursion. The main purpose is often to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as with the trip to the art fair. Or sometimes the main purpose is to teach the children about skills that can be used in Kṛṣṇa's service, as when we visit people who show us cottage industries such as weaving or blacksmithing. Still, we try to give people Kṛṣṇa consciousness in all circumstances.

For example, when we took our *gurukula*—kindergarten through high school—to the cottage industry exhibit at the North Carolina state fair, our students spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness constantly simply because they dressed as devotees. Many people remarked on their discipline and behavior, and many asked them questions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Children are always learning something. Children who take part in their parents' activities learn life skills; children left at home or with friends learn incompetence. Kṛṣṇa conscious parents can teach their children to show themselves easily and happily as Kṛṣṇa's servants, or to hide in shame or embarrassment behind the clothes of Western fashion. We should teach our children to step out for the pleasure of the Lord.

Urmilā Devī Dāsī was initiated in 1973 and has been involved in ISKCON education since 1983. She, her husband, and their three children live at the ISKCON community in Hillsborough, North Carolina, where she runs a school for children aged 5–18. She is the main author/compiler of Vaikuṇṭha Children, *a gurukula classroom guidebook.*



STRAIGHT TALK

Thorn

by Vraja Kishor Dāsa

CHEW THE THORN. Drink the blood. Call it pleasure. "Quench that thirst."

Sex is suffering. Bleed envy. Bleed jealousy. Bleed heartache. Call it pleasure. Chew the thorn.

I won't.

Go ahead, say it. Call me a fanatic. I don't mind—it's not the first time. Hey, I'm a *brahmacārī* (celibate). Okay—so I'm obviously a crazy.

Anyway, let me tell you a crazy story about a camel. Camels have strange behavior. Plodding through the desert for days on end gets them really thirsty. But there's no water in sight, which freaks the camel out a bit.

Now the weird part: The thirsty camel walks up to some scraggly shrub brush, sticks his big lips around it, and bites off a thorn. Smile on his face, eyes staring blankly to the horizon, he begins to chew. Thorn slices tongue. Tongue bleeds. He lets the blood well up inside his mouth and anticipates the pleasure, the wonderful pleasure.

Swallow. Yes, oh yes—the sensation. Quench that thirst.

Anyway, another crazy story: Human camels plod through this desert world. Astray from the lands of abundant waters, we crave to slake our parched throats, to gulp down the cool waters of pleasure. But there is hot, sandy reality beneath our feet, and no water in sight. We freak out a bit.

We human camels have strange behavior. Wide-eyed and hopeful, we saunter up to the scraggly shrub brush of material happiness, eager to imitate the more "experienced" camels around us. We slap our lips around the most inviting thorn of them all: sex.

Heart beating fast, eyes blankly lodged in the horizon, we vigorously chew the thorn: and it slices the tongue. Everything is lost in the immediate sensation—we don't want to hear your fairy tales of "real water" in a far-off land. This blood will satisfy us.

The wounds bleed. Wounds of envy. Wounds of jealousy. Wounds of Romeo and Juliet. Wounds of conquesting another human being. We hardly care to notice. Just let the blood well in your mouth, and anticipate the pleasure, the wondrous pleasure.

Swallow. Yes, oh yes—the sensation. Quench that thirst.

No. The thirst is not quenched. We shall die in the desert. Alone, barren.

Vraja Kishor Dāsa joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement three years ago. He and his band, 108, are based at ISKCON's temple in Dallas, Texas.

IDOL WORSHIP AND THE FORM OF GOD

What does the Bible really say about worshiping idols?

by Satyarāja Dāsa

REMEMBER the old Cecil B. De Mille movies? The hero would rescue the innocent masses from the heathen idol worshipers. He would smash the idols, and we would feel warm all over, our beliefs being molded as much by Hollywood as by Saturday or Sunday morning Bible-thumpers. We knew that the Bible condemned idol worship, and although we may not have been the most ardently religious, we just knew that idol worship was wrong, as we continued reverently watching our TV screen. Meanwhile, we adored Charlton Heston's version of Moses, Mr. Heston himself being the idol of millions.

What exactly is idol worship? Why does the Bible condemn it? And who is an idol worshiper?

In the Bible, God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:3) This is the Lord's preface to His famous proscription of idol worship. And a significant preface it is. The implication is that the people of Israel were fashioning idols of entities other than God and worshiping those idols. The classic example is the golden calf. But there is no restriction on worshiping *His* image, only on making idols of "other gods." The Supreme Lord says something similar in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.23): "Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kuntī, but they do so in a wrong way."

Now let us continue with the biblical statement against idol worship. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven [carved] image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the sky above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: *for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* . . . " (Exodus 20:4–5)

Taking into account the Lord's preface and the last sentence of this verse, we can only conclude that the Lord's restriction is against making an image of "a lesser god," for "He is a jealous God." We do ourselves an injustice when we take biblical verses out of context. The Lord evidently did not want the people of Israel to carve a form of some lesser god, which seemed to be their tendency (e.g., the golden calf). But the Lord never says, "Do not carve a form of Me." Obviously, His

Right: Moses delivers tablets inscribed by God that bear His commandment against worshiping "graven images."

How can we love something formless or void? That's impossible. We are all persons, and we want to love other persons—not some dark oblivion in outer space.

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restriction was more against worshiping lesser gods than against carving forms. Idol worship means worshiping someone other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

But what if we could worship the form of the Supreme Lord? Some people argue that the Lord is beyond form. They say that God is unlimited, and so cannot be confined to some form. But since everything in God's creation has form, how can God have no form? The creation would have something God doesn't. That would mean that God is less than His creation, or in other words, that the complete is incomplete, which is simply illogical. The complete whole must contain everything within and beyond our experience; otherwise He cannot be complete.

Besides, all the great scriptures of the world instruct us to love God. How can we love something formless or void? That's impossible. We are all persons, and we want to love other persons—not some dark oblivion in outer space. We want personal relationships, and the ultimate relationship is with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Granted, God's form is not like ours. It is completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception. But it is a form nonetheless. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1), one of the world's oldest religious books, states:

> *īśvara paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*
> *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*
> *anādir ādir govinda*
> *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

"Kṛṣṇa [God] is the supreme controller. He has a form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He is the prime cause of all causes."

But religionists throughout the ages have projected their own limitations on the form of God. This practice is exemplified in the works of Moses Maimonides, the most respected biblical scholar of Medieval times, who stated in his *Mishna Torah* that God is said to be in the heavens above and on the earth below and so could not have a form. After all, Maimonides reasoned, one form cannot be in two places at once.

God may not have a form like Maimonides's—a form that cannot be in two places at once—but that doesn't mean God has no form at all. In fact, He has an unlimited transcendental form. And a close look at the biblical literature reveals this quite clearly, even though scholars like Maimonides have relegated biblical statements about the form of God to the realm of metaphor. In the Bible we read, "under His feet" (Exodus 24:10); "inscribed with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18); "the hand of the Lord" (Exodus 9:3); "the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 38:7); "the ears of the Lord" (Numbers 11:1). Such phrases permeate the biblical literature. Why would the Bible be so misleading as to consistently present God as having a form if in reality He doesn't have one? This would be a dangerous metaphor, to be sure.

Rather, the Bible clearly asserts that God has a form but only the most qualified will ever get to see it. "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. . . . Not that any man hath seen the Father, *save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*" (John 5:37, 6:46)

Ezekiel (1:26) describes God as having "the semblance of a human form." In Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, God appeared before Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel. Here God appeared in a humanlike form, although the form is not elaborately described. In verse one of chapter eighteen, the Lord appeared to Abraham. In verse two, we are told that Abraham looked upon Him. In verse fourteen, while addressing Abraham the Lord said of Himself, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" This simple statement of God's defeats any skeptical idea as to whether or not God can have a form. He can do whatever He likes, and we should not try to limit Him by saying, "He can do this" and "He can't do that."

God, in the form of a man, paid a nocturnal visit to Jacob on the bank of the Jabbok. In this encounter Jacob came face to face with God (Genesis 32:24–32). This section of the Bible is wonderfully reminiscent of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastime of wrestling with the cowherd boys of Vṛndāvana. Jacob is described as wrestling with someone who seemed to be a man, and who eventually dislocated Jacob's thigh. Jacob exclaimed that this "man" was actually God. He memorialized the encounter by calling the place "Peniel," which means "the face of God." Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Genesis 32:30)

Many Bible translators would have it that Jacob saw "an angel" or "some divine being." They translate in this way because Judaism began to see God in an impersonal way and so could not recognize that Jacob had indeed seen "the face" of the Supreme Lord. Yet the exact Hebrew word Jacob used is *Elohim*, which unmistakably refers to God Himself.

Moses also perceived the form of God. Although he said that no man can see God and live (Exodus 33:20), God appeared to him. The Bible carefully relates that event: "Moses then went up with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, and they beheld the God of Israel." (Exodus 24:9–10) Moses and the men were shocked—they thought that seeing God meant instant death. But they survived.

Moses obviously believed that he was standing in the presence of God Himself. In fact, Moses is elsewhere said to have seen the back of God (Exodus 33:23). If God can have a back, He

can have a front. These terms have no meaning if God is simply an amorphous being, with no form or identity. And yet many biblical students today would have it that God is indeed formless. Of course, this impersonalistic theory goes against the original traditions of both Jews and Christians. Every good Christian knows that Jesus sits at the Father's right hand. (Mark 16:19) Once again, the same logic —if he has a right hand, He has a left hand.

Implicitly, God must have form. And if God Himself or His intimate devotees reveal His form, no stricture in the world says that a lover of God cannot fashion a statue according to *that* image and worship it. After all, the form of God is not a thing of this world—it is not a graven image of a lesser god in the sky, of the earth, or in the water. In short, the Bible does not restrict us from worshiping God in His original transcendental form. And since God is absolute, He and His form are nondifferent.

The worship of God in His original transcendental form, as revealed by the pure devotee and the scriptures, is called Deity worship—and it stands a long distance away from idol worship.

Although mystics of the Western religious traditions acknowledge that God does indeed have some spiritual form, even they are at a loss in describing just what that form is. The Jewish mystics, for instance, say that God, in His heavenly kingdom, complies with the commandments, wraps *tfillin* "around His arm," and wears a prayer shawl. (Rosh Hashanah 17b, Talmud) They say that He even studies Torah three hours a day to set an example (Aboda Zara 3b, Talmud). Although most Jews are aware of these statements, they tend to make light of them or, once again, to relegate them to the realm of metaphor. But the *Shi'ur Komah* and other Cabbalistic literature develop these ideas further, clearly indicating that God does indeed have a transcendental bodily form.

Christians are certainly aware of God as a person. Jesus referred to God as *Abba,* Father, in a disarmingly personal way, so much so that the Jews of his time openly ridiculed him for it. The mystics of Islam also declare that the form of God exists, while orthodox Muslims, like members of other Occidental religions, deny it altogether. Still, one champion of orthodoxy, Al-Ashari (ninth century A.D.), declared in his creeds, "We confess that God has a countenance, without asking how. . . . We confess that God has two hands, without asking why."

So the mystics of all religious traditions acknowledge the form of God, albeit without detailed information.

But ancient India's Vedic literature, which predates the Bible as well as the Koran and was written in a highly advanced spiritual culture, specifically reveals God's form, His features, His pastimes, and His personality. Of course, God's attributes are infinite, and words can only hint at His glory. But the *Vedas* supply man with more information than he can accommodate—to the point of enlightenment. At that stage man sees Kṛṣṇa, God, everywhere, but that highly advanced realization is not to be imitated. So the *Vedas* prescribe worship of the Deity of Kṛṣṇa. We may not be able to see spirit, but we *can* see the Deity in the temple. This seeing helps us focus our minds on God—on His original form. And, once again, since the Lord is absolute, He is nondifferent from His Deity form in the temple. As the Deity, He purifies all onlookers with His transcendental form.

The Vedic literature vividly describes the form of Kṛṣṇa and His intimate personal activities. The *Vedas* recommend

(*please turn to page 50*)

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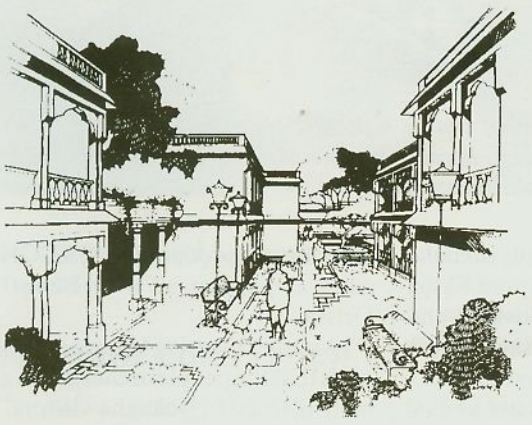

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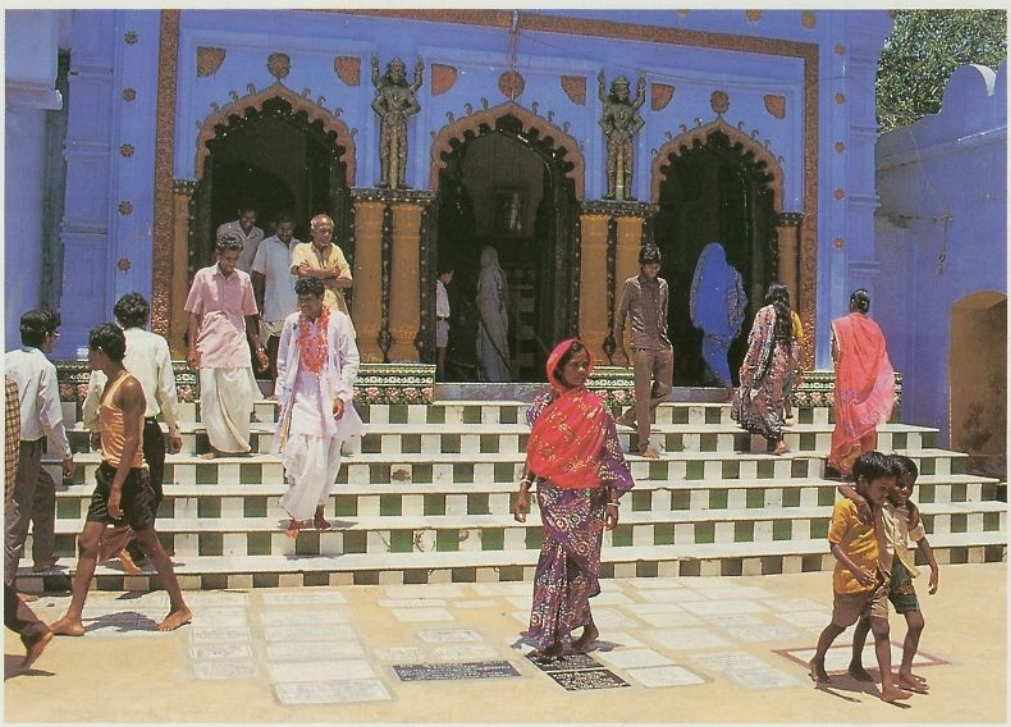
REMUNA
THE PLACE OF PLEASURE

At this temple in Orissa, the Deity is famous as a thief.

Text by Bhakti Vikāśa Swami
Photos by Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa



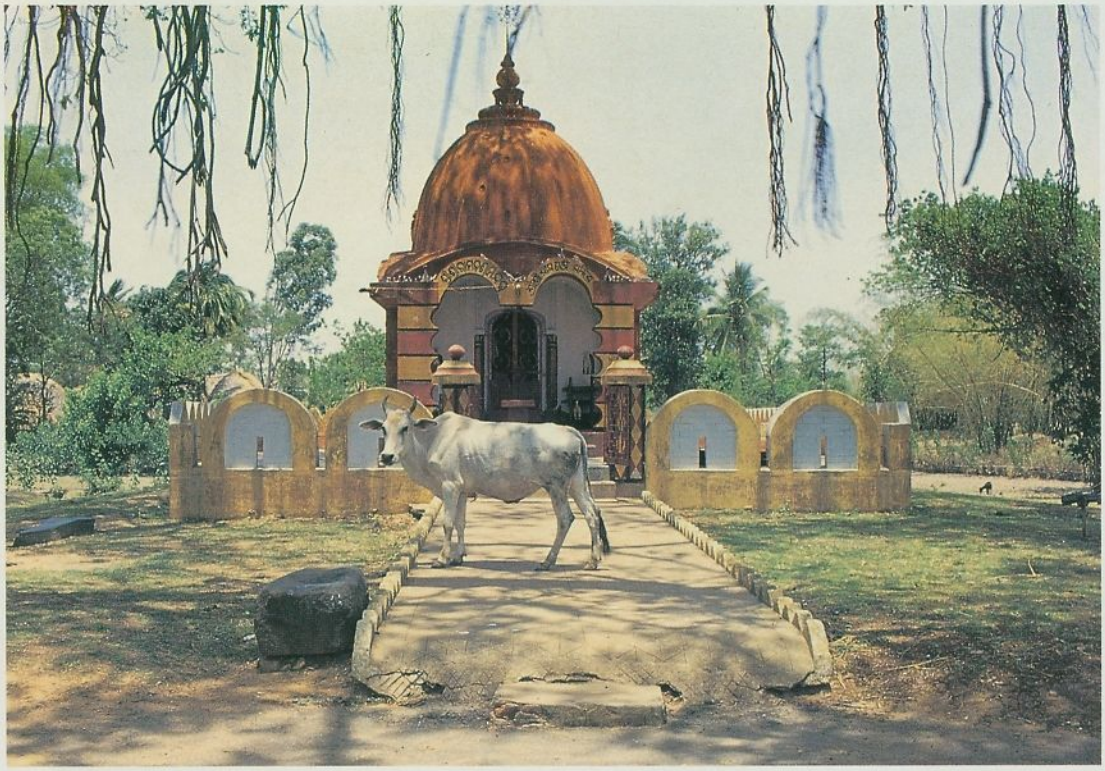
The Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha temple in Remuna (above), though not one of India's most well-known temples, gets a steady flow of pilgrims. Near the entrance, pilgrims pay homage to replicas of the footprints of Lord Caitanya (right), who visited here in the early sixteenth century.

REMUNA IS A TINY VILLAGE in Orissa, but it's quite a busy place, with people coming and going all the time. All the action centers on the temple of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha.

We have come to Remuna just at the end of the Candana-yātrā, when the Deities are smeared with cooling sandalwood pulp (*candana*). During the hottest time of the day, the priests apply *candana* to the chest of the temple's three Kṛṣṇa Deities: Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopīnātha. On one day (Akśaya-tṛtiyā) Their whole bodies are smeared.

At Remuna, each day starts at 4:00 A.M. with chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, played from a cassette over loudspeakers in the temple compound. The cassette, produced by ISKCON Calcutta, is popular all over Bengal and Orissa.

Another pleasing feature of the temple is that the people in charge are genuinely pleased to welcome visitors. This reminds us of Remuna's long tradition of welcoming devotees. We read in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of how well Mādha-



The Rāmacaṇḍī Durgā temple is a short walk from the Gopīnātha temple.

Pots of the famous condensed milk (left) that has been offered to the Remuna Deities for centuries. Above, the author points the way to the temple.

vendra Purī and Lord Caitanya were received here.

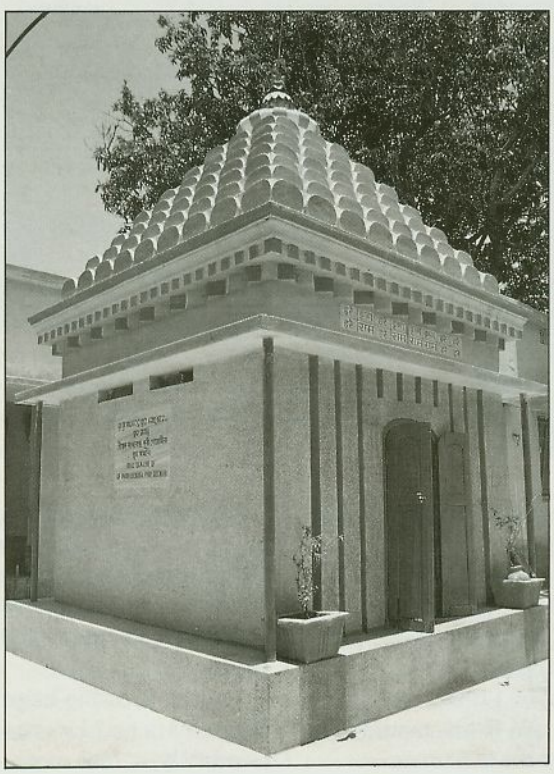
Seeing the Lord's Form

The *pūjārī* (priest) told me, "You must come and see the dressing of the Deities at 6:30 in the morning." So we went. To be allowed to see the dressing of a Deity is rare, but here everyone can come see. Gopīnātha appears carved from a piece of stone, like a bas-relief, except that most of His form is visible. (See "How the Deity Came to Remuna, p. 27.) On the stone are other figures, said to be carved by Lord Kṛṣṇa in His incarnation as Lord Rāmacandra. The *pūjārī* showed us these figures.

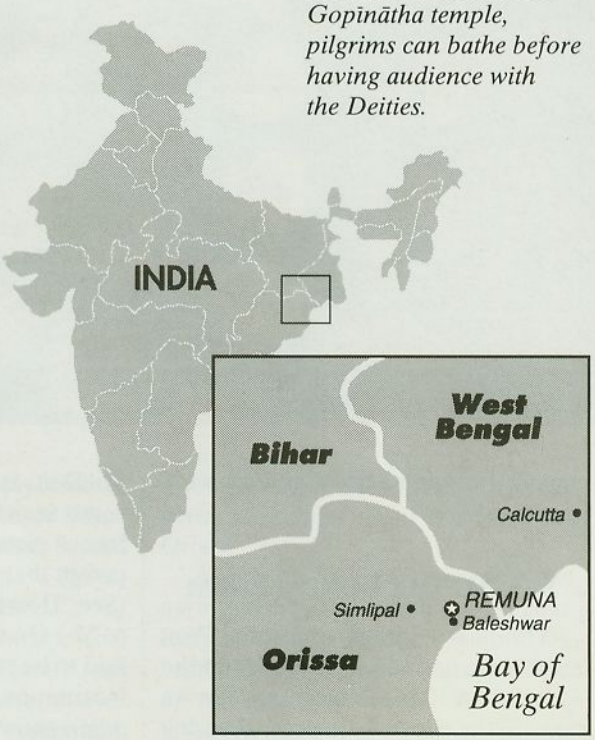
We also found out why Gopīnātha's flute looks rectangular, as you can see in His photo, rather than cylindrical: the flute you see covers the original flute, which is rectangular and is part of the Deity.

As the dressing began, only Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa and I were there to watch. Gradually a few more people came,

At this manmade pond near the entrance to the Gopīnātha temple, pilgrims can bathe before having audience with the Deities.



The samādhi *temple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī.*



How the Deity Came to Remuna

ŚRĪ KAIŚORĀNANDADEVA Gosvāmī, a disciple of Rasikānanda (see sidebar, p. 29), wrote a book in Oriya, the language of Orissa, telling how the Gopīnātha Deity came to Remuna.

The book relates that in Tretā-yuga, more than a million years ago, the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra and His wife, Sītā Devī, lived for some time at Chitrakut, in north central India. (See BTG, Jan/Feb 1993.) Once during the rainy season a strong storm forced Rāma and Sītā to take shelter in the *āśrama* of some sages. On seeing the many cows in the *āśrama* and hearing their mooing, Lord Rāmacandra told Sītā, "Seeing all these cows, I'm reminded of My pastimes in Dvāpara-yuga." Lord Rāma was referring to His later appearance as Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Sītā Devī said, "What do You mean? Please tell me about those pastimes."

Lord Rāma replied, "Just wait a week. With an arrow I'll carve some pictures of those pastimes in a black rock, and you will be able to see them."

But after four days Sītā said, "I can't wait any longer. Please show me what You've done."

To please her, Lord Rāmacandra then showed her the carvings. He had completed a Deity of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa (His back still attached to the stone) and, on the stone itself, drawings of Kṛṣṇa's eight principal *gopīs* (cowherd girlfriends) and four maidservants to the *gopīs*. Also depicted were twelve cows, Lord Balarāma wrestling Muṣṭika, Lord Kṛṣṇa wrestling Cāṇūra, and a few other scenes.

Pleased to see all this, Sītā began worshiping the Gopāla Deity at Chitrakut.

After a few days Rāma and Sītā left, so Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, came and took over the worship of the Deity (a service he was to perform through the rest of Tretā-yuga, through Dvāpara-yuga, and for several centuries of Kali-yuga).

Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha

When Lord Rāmacandra returned to India from Laṅkā after killing the demon Rāvaṇa, He stopped for four days at the place now known as Remuna. Sītā Devī wanted to bathe there in the Ganges, so Lord Rāma shot seven arrows into the ground and brought forth the Ganges. Today that place is called Saptashara, "seven arrows." A deity of Lord Śiva named Gargasvara was later installed there. Nearby stands a deity of Durgā Devī known as Rāmacaṇḍī. Because Lord Rāmacandra felt pleasure (*ramaṇa*) at that place, it came to be known as Remuna.

In the thirteenth century King Langula Narasiṁhadeva from Orissa was traveling to holy places with his queen and many great sages. At Chitrakut they saw the Deity of Gopāla. Not knowing that Lord Brahmā was coming there daily, the king was astonished that no one was worshiping such a beautiful Deity.

That night the Deity appeared to the king in a dream and asked to be taken to a more populated place. The king decided to take Gopāla to Jagannātha Purī.

The king selected some qualified *brāhmaṇas* to worship the Deity and started for Purī. But when they reached Remuna, a beautiful cowherd village, Gopāla again appeared to the king in a dream and asked to be installed and worshiped there. The village people, delighted, gave the Deity large quantities of milk and milk products every day. The queen noticed that the Deity was accompanied by carvings of the eight principal *gopīs*, so she named Him Gopīnātha, "Lord of the *gopīs*."

everyone looking intensely at the beauty of the Deities. We sat chanting on our beads, drinking through our eyes the beauty of Govinda, Gopīnātha, and Madana-mohana. (The Deities of Govinda and Madana-mohana were brought here from Vṛndāvana about 1938 by a devotee named Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī.)

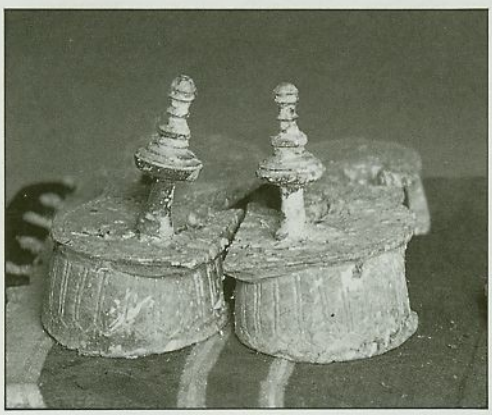
The *pūjārī* quickly and expertly dressed the Deities using simple cloth, which he twisted and turned to make an attractive outfit.

Remuna's Holy Sites

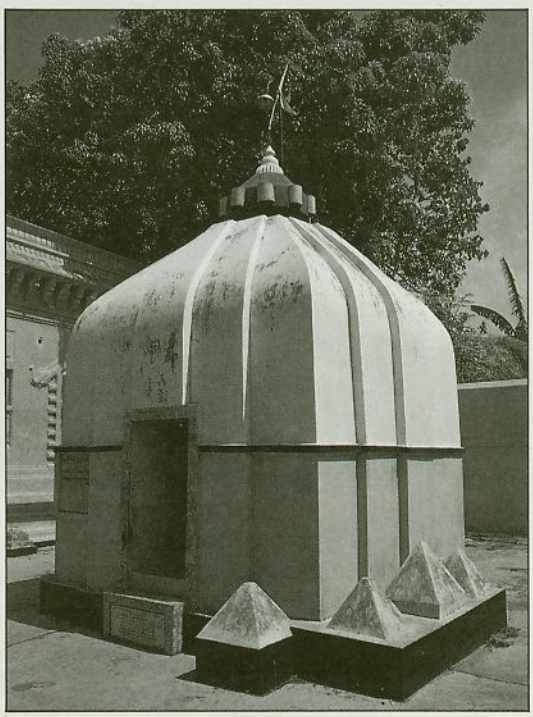
I first came to Remuna in 1978. The place now is more developed. Nothing grand, but there are a few shops, and many more people come to see the Deity. Many come to arrange for sons and daughters to be married in the temple.

Pilgrims come in a steady flow throughout the day, but no big crowds like the ones you'll find at Purī, Tirupati, or Nathadwar. Probably a few hundred pilgrims a day visit here, a thousand or so on Sundays. We are here in the summer, when there are not so many visitors. In the winter, when the weather is cool, more people come, mostly from Orissa and Bengal. Many people who visit belong to various Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava

Rasikānanda lived in this room next to the Gopīnātha temple.



Rasikānanda's shoes are worshiped inside the room where he stayed.



Rasikānanda's samādhi *stands just outside his room. The pyramids are the* samādhis *of his chief associates, who left this world in separation from him just after his passing.*

sects, groups of followers of Lord Caitanya. Several Gauḍīya families have settled here.

Previously Remuna was directly on the route between Bengal and Purī. Now it's slightly off the route. The main rail line goes through Baleshwar, twelve kilometers east. The original route still exists and is known as Gauradanda, "the path touched by the holy feet of Lord Caitanya."

The Gopīnātha temple stands in an area by itself in the fields, about half a kilometer from the village of Remuna. At the main entrance to the temple, a bakul tree with huge branches marks a spot said to be the site of the first temple, built by King Narasiṁhadeva.

About two hundred meters from the present temple, near the temples of Rāmacaṇḍī and Gargasvara, there used to be a village market. The local people say it belonged to a cowherd village where every day the villagers gave sixty liters of milk to make Gopīnātha a spiced condensed milk called *amṛta-keli.* The market, it is

(*please turn to page 31*)

Drummers at the Gopīnātha temple play mṛdaṅgas *for the pleasure of the Lord.*

Rasikānanda, a Great Devotee of Lord Gopīnātha

NOT LONG AFTER the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a king who was a Deity hater was going around smashing Deities in temples. When the people of Remuna heard he was coming, they hid Gopīnātha in a pond three miles away. The king was upset that he could not find Gopīnātha, so he struck and partially broke Rāmacaṇḍī, the Durgā deity.

Meanwhile, a great devotee named Rasikānanda received an order in a dream to excavate the pond where Gopīnātha had been hidden. He recovered the Gopīnātha Deity, built a temple for Him, and took charge of His worship.

Rasikānanda was the foremost disciple of Śyāmānanda, who had helped transport from Vṛndāvana to Bengal the writings of the Gosvāmīs, leaders in Lord Caitanya's movement. Śyāmānanda had spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness extensively in Orissa, where Rasikānanda had become his disciple.

Rasikānanda

When Rasikānanda decided it was time to leave the world, he went into the Gopīnātha temple and disappeared. He had been performing *saṅkīrtana* in the temple courtyard with seven of his associates, and now his associates were so overwhelmed by spiritual separation that they too gave up their bodies and entered the spiritual world.

The *samādhis* (tombs) of Rasikānanda and these associates stand outside the temple. Each spring the people of Remuna hold a twelve-day festival to commemorate the passing of Rasikānanda.

A priest of the Gopīnātha temple conducts a wedding in the temple courtyard.

Visiting Remuna

THE BEST WAY to get to Remuna from Calcutta is to take a train from Howrah station to Baleshwar, about a five-hour trip, depending on the train. From Baleshwar you can go the twelve kilometers to Remuna by taxi, auto riksha, or bus.

There's a small guesthouse at the Gopīnātha temple, and there are some good hotels in Baleshwar.

You can get *prasādam* at the Gopīnātha temple at midday and in the evening. You reserve your meal by paying in advance. You'll get a plate of rice, *dāl,* chutney, and two vegetable dishes.

The temple's famous spiced condensed milk is available in the afternoon and evening, in small, medium, and large pots.

Tumultuous Worship

EVENING *ĀRATI* (worship) at the Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha temple is spectacular. Just before 7:00 P.M. the curtain draws closed. Two *pūjārīs* in the Deity room bang gongs, someone in the courtyard bangs a big drum, and a *kīrtana* group sings and plays *mṛdaṅga* drums and *karatālas* (hand cymbals), all together making a tremendous sound.

At seven the curtain is whisked open. Everyone outside the Deity room offers obeisances, and the *kīrtana* picks up again with full volume. The *pūjārī* offers incense and camphor while a second *pūjārī* stands behind him waving a *cāmara* (yak-tail whisk). Although the temple always has electricity, during the *ārati* a man holds a traditional torch of oil-soaked cloth.

After the *pūjārī* has offered the incense, the curtain is closed while he lights the ghee lamp. Meanwhile the *kīrtana* goes on, and when the door opens, the *kīrtana* becomes intense—*bang! bang! bang!*

The *pūjārī* offers the ghee lamp and then water in a conch shell. When he finishes, he walks through the *kīrtana* courtyard, throwing the water on both sides, as all the devotees offer obeisances to get the water on their heads. The *ārati* lasts about ten minutes.

The Gargasvara Śiva temple, near the spot where Lord Rāmacandra shot seven arrows into the ground to bring forth the Ganges.

(*continued from page 28*)
said, is where Mādhavendra Purī stayed when he came to Remuna. (See "How Gopīnātha Got the Name Kṣīra-corā," p. 32.) Mādhavendra Purī's sitting place and wooden shoes are worshiped at a small temple at the spot. The temple is the *samādhi* (tomb) of Mādhavendra Purī.

In two places at the Gopīnātha temple, pilgrims worship the footprints of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The footprints are modeled after the ones in the Jagannātha temple in Purī, where Caitanya Mahāprabhu would stand next to the Garuḍa-stambha, the pillar holding Garuḍa, the eagle carrier of Lord Viṣṇu. It is said that Lord Caitanya felt such intense ecstasy upon seeing the Jagannātha Deity that His feet melted impressions into the stone floor.

A little shop at the Gopīnātha temple sells books in Oriya, Bengali, and English telling about the glories of the temple. The shop sells photos of Gopī-nātha (for visitors to photograph the Deity is prohibited). The shop also sells sweets to offer the Deity. After being offered, the sweets are given back to the person who bought them, a common system in India.

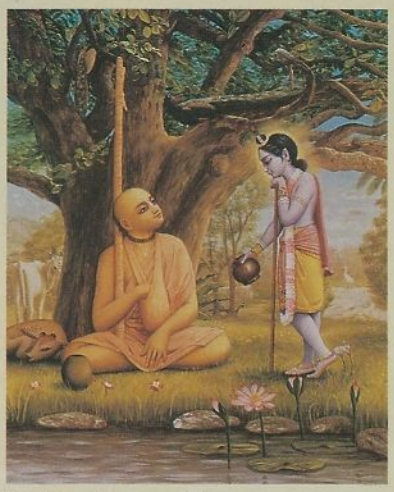
Just outside the entrance to the temple is a small manmade pond. It has steps going down to it so one can reach it to bathe. Another pond, a very old one, about a hundred meters from the temple, is where devotees from Bengal would bathe on the way to see Lord Caitanya in Purī. Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, Mādhavendra Purī—so many great souls must have bathed here. And now we are so fortunate to get that chance. Although the pond has become the local place where people come to wash their clothes,

How Gopīnātha Got the Name Kṣīra-corā

THE NAME "Kṣīra-corā" means "one who stole condensed milk." When Lord Caitanya visited the Gopīnātha temple in Remuna, He told the devotees traveling with Him how the Deity had come to receive that name. Lord Caitanya had heard the story from His spiritual master, Īśvara Purī, a disciple of Mādhavendra Purī. As related in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* it is Mādhavendra Purī for whom the condensed milk was stolen.

Mādhavendra Purī was a highly advanced devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. While living in Vṛndāvana absorbed in remembering the pastimes of the Lord, he saw Kṛṣṇa appear in a dream and tell him He had been buried for a long time in a jungle nearby. Kṛṣṇa wanted Mādhavendra Purī to dig Him up. Following the Lord's instruction, with the help of the local people Mādhavendra Purī discovered a Deity of Kṛṣṇa named Gopāla.

Mādhavendra Purī built a temple for Gopāla and served Him for two years. Then again one night Gopāla appeared to him in a dream



In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa appears to Mādhavendra Purī to give him milk.

and asked him to go to Orissa to get sandalwood to smear on His body.

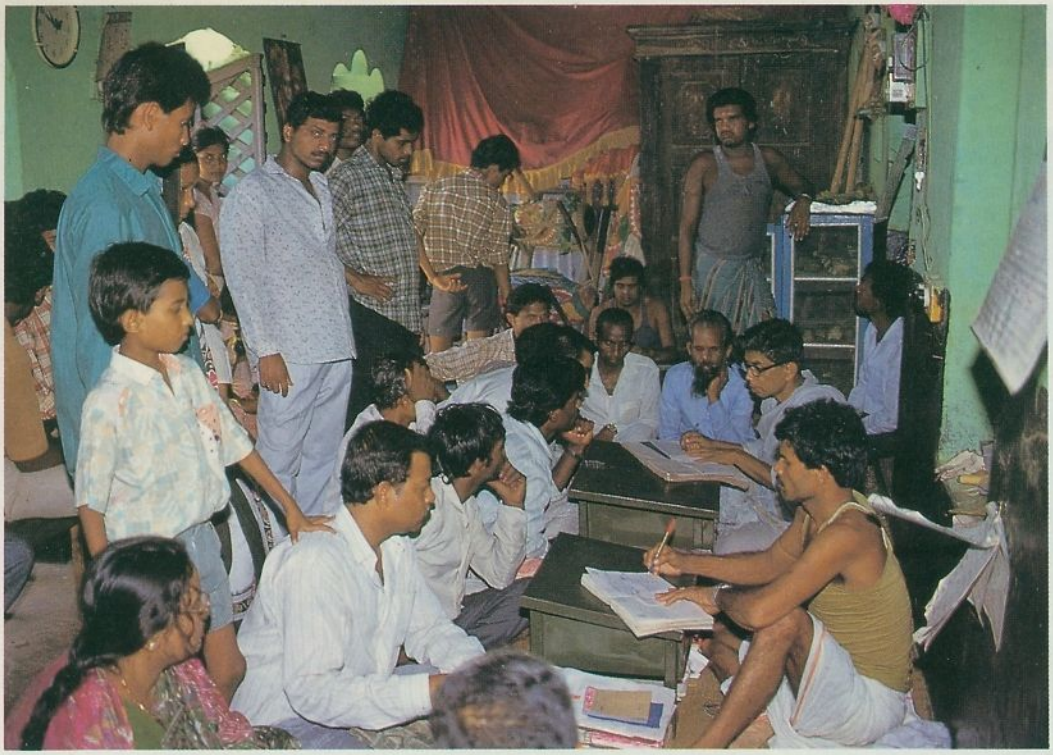
On the way to Orissa, Mādhavendra Purī stopped at the Gopīnātha temple in Remuna. He asked the priest what kind of food was offered to Gopīnātha, thinking he could offer the same preparations to his own Deity, Gopāla. The priest mentioned the condensed milk (*kṣīra*) known as *amṛta-keli,* which was famous because its taste was nectarean.

That evening, while the priest made an offering to the Lord, Mādhavendra Purī thought that if the priest were to offer him some of the condensed milk he could taste it and then be able to prepare it for Gopāla. He then at once became ashamed for thinking of tasting the Lord's food during the offering. Feeling he had committed a great offense, he left the temple and went to a vacant marketplace to chant the names of the Lord.

Later that night, the Gopīnātha Deity appeared in a dream to the priest and told him He had hidden a pot of condensed milk behind His cloth. Gopīnātha told the priest to deliver the condensed milk to a saintly person named Mādhavendra Purī. The priest did as told.

Mādhavendra Purī felt ecstasy to learn that the Lord had stolen condensed milk for him. After drinking the milk, Mādhavendra Purī kept the pot, and every day he would eat a little piece of it.

Eager pilgrims show that a visit to Remuna isn't complete without tasting Lord Gopīnātha's delicious condensed-milk prasādam.



In the temple office, pilgrims reserve plates of Deity prasādam, *served twice a day.*

A photo hanging in the temple office shows Kṛṣṇa as Govardhana Hill, made of rice, sweets, and savories. Devotees make this form on Govardhana Pūjā, one of the many festivals celebrated in Remuna.

the spiritual benefit of bathing there remains.

About a ten-minute walk from the temple of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha is a branch of the Gaudiya Math, the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Prabhupāda's spiritual master. When he came here just a few years before he left this world, he wanted to start a branch of his mission here but did not accomplish that desire. Shortly after he left this world, however, someone donated for the Gaudiya Math in Remuna a 300-year-old Jagannātha temple. Besides the Jagannātha deities, the temple is now the home of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities originally installed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in Mymensingh, in what is now Bangladesh. The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities were brought here when Bengal was partitioned.

The Remuna area is also the birthplace of Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a great spiritual master in the line of Lord Caitanya. You can visit their birthplaces if you can find someone to guide you; most of the local people don't seem to know about these places.

TASTING THE NECTAR

Last night I was able to fulfill a long-held desire to read the story of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha in front of the Deity Himself. By good fortune, someone here had a copy of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and I was able to read that in front of the Deity. Eight devotees arrived from Māyāpur today on their way to Purī, and they have asked me to read the story to them tonight.

Remuna is famous for the condensed milk called *amṛta-keli,* which is very sweet. And we enjoy another kind of sweet nectar here—the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Both of these sweet nectars are enjoyable at Remuna—the place of transcendental pleasure.

Bhakti Vikāśa Swami comes from England but has lived in India for many years. He now teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness at the ISKCON center in Baroda, Gujarat.

"Kṛṣṇa's Mercy"

How a high-school kid from the American capital joined Hare Kṛṣṇa, made a million dollars, and stays focused on spiritual life.

Devotee: Anuttama Dāsa, age 40
Residence: Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. (a suburb of Washington, D.C.)
Family: Wife, Rāma Tulasī Devī Dāsī; daughter, Vṛndā Dāsī (12); and son, Pītāmbara Dāsa (10)
Profession: Buying and selling cars
How long connected with Hare Kṛṣṇa: Since 1971

On a recent visit to Florida, Anuttama Dāsa dropped by the BTG offices and talked with us about his spiritual life.

Getting Started

I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, in eleventh grade. I had been searching for the truth—and was having a hard time finding it. I had an interest in God. I'd become a vegetarian, and I was studying the Bible and some yoga and whatnot. And I'd heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa. I'd seen the devotees on and off, here and there. I'd met them at a 1969 peace demonstration in Washington, D.C., and gotten some incense from them.

And then I'd also seen them in Manhattan in maybe 1967, when I was there with my parents. I couldn't have been more than twelve or thirteen. There were devotees chanting across the street. And I said, "Mom and Dad! Let's go over and look at *them*! Look at that!" But my father grabbed my hand and told me, "No, we gotta go."

So by 1971 I'd heard of the devotees. I'd heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa. I didn't know exactly what it was. I knew it was a spiritual group—something from Indian culture. And everyone said, "If you want to meet the Kṛṣṇas, you have to go to Georgetown. They're in Georgetown every Saturday."

So I went down to Georgetown (the Greenwich Village of Washington, D.C.), and there were the devotees chanting. They were on each corner, passing out *Back to Godheads* and "simply wonderfuls" [a kind of sweet].

So I went to the corner and said, "I've been looking for you people, and I want to know what you're all about." And a devotee said, "Here, take this book. Read this book. Here—have a simply wonderful. This is spiritual food, offered to God." The simply wonderful was wonderful.

That devotee was happy to talk to me, but then he had to move on. So then I walked to the next corner and met another devotee, and then I had *another* simply wonderful. And then the next corner and *another* simply wonderful. And by that time I also had several books and *Back to Godheads.*

Then I went to the temple. They had invited me to to the feast at the temple, on Dupont Circle, and I went that Sunday.

And I just became very quickly involved. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā,* "due to past lives." The incomplete yogi, Kṛṣṇa says, in his next life begins again.

I remember reading Prabhupāda's books, and the books were so definite. You had to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, and there was no grey. It wasn't like "You can be a part-time devotee, you can be a fringie," or something like that. You have to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. You have to give up your nonsense. You can't have two lives. You can't have your sense enjoyment and your spiritual liberation at the same time. You have to get serious.

And back in those days the Society hadn't evolved to a congregational level. To be a devotee meant to live in the

Mr. and Mrs. Morrison

Left to right: Pītāmbara Dāsa, Vṛndā Dāsī, Anuttama Dāsa, Rāma Tulasī Devī Dāsī. Their calf, Govinda, was saved from slaughter.

temple, to surrender everything. There was no choice.

I was still in school. I was young. I wasn't even eighteen yet. And I was living with my parents. So I used to come every Sunday regularly.

And then Easter vacation came, and I stayed at the temple for the whole vacation. "This is my vacation—I'm going to stay in the temple." And my parents, fortunately enough, were understanding. They felt I was going through a phase—I had been through so many phases. A typical teenager growing up.

So I came back with a shaved head—or at least a crewcut and a *śikhā* [the tuft of hair worn by men on the back of the head as a sign of devotion]. And I remember my father saying, "First it's long, now it's short. Why don't you just leave it alone!"

I used to pass out books to my friends, and with all my friends I used to talk about Kṛṣṇa. And I couldn't understand why they couldn't quite grasp it. Even to get them to become vegetarian was not easy. I guess I was kind of simple. For some reason becoming a devotee was natural to me. I saw it as the thing to do. It all made sense. But to them it didn't.

I remember saying to one devotee, "I joined very quickly. Why is it that when I talk to my friends they don't want to?" She said, "Well, you're a very special case." And I remember thinking, "Was I special?" To me, to become a devotee was a natural thing.

When summer came around I joined the temple. And then school came again—my senior year. So my parents said, "We don't care what you do, but you've got to finish high school. You're not a complete human being—you can't make it in this world—unless you have a high-school diploma. You can live at the temple, but you've got to go to school."

So I said all right, and I went to public school in Georgetown. I would go every day to high school in a *dhotī* [robe] and a *śikhā*. Back in those days we didn't wear "karmi clothes."* There were no karmi clothes, no edgies, no fringies. It was a hundred percent—there was no choice. You know—you were surrendered. So I went through my whole senior year in *dhotī* and *śikhā*.

And in my senior year, in January of '72, after six months of living in the temple, I got initiated.

So that was my start.

"Oh, New York!"

In Washington, the temple president's wife would always talk about New York: "Oh, the New York temple is so wonderful!" Washington was a small temple, rather on the quiet side. We had seven to ten devotees. So she would always say, "New York! There are so many devotees! And our press is there, and the artists are there . . . " So it got into my mind.

So one time when Śrīla Prabhupāda

*A "karmi" leads a life of working hard but with no spiritual purpose. So "karmi clothes" is devotee lingo for "ordinary street clothes."

It's not that the essence of your life is whatever you do to make a living. You have to do something—but the real pleasure comes in your devotional life.

• • •

came to New York we went to see him, as we always did. And I arranged to stay and work with the press. That was the summer of '72.

And one day the press manager was saying to the temple president, "The headlight on the van is broken, and I'm going to take it to the dealer and have it fixed." And I'm sitting there thinking, "Well, I can put a headlight in. I mean, I can do that much." I never had any formal training on cars. I used to help my father do brakes and change oil. I knew how to turn a screwdriver. And here's a devotee saying he's going to go spend *money*. And, you know, spending money is like a sin: "We don't spend money. We do it all ourselves." So I said, "Well, I can put the light in."

So I put the light in, and they all said, "Ooh! We've got somebody who can work on *cars*! Great!" So I used to work at the press, and then I'd spend an hour or two fixing the cars. And then gradually it became working more on the cars and less at the press.

I never had any formal training in mechanics. I used to go to the gas stations. And just as you need a guru for anything, I used to go to my gas-station gurus. I'd say, "I have this problem," and they'd say, "Well, check this and that," and I'd go back and figure it out. And in that way I learned a lot about vehicles. We used to buy cars and sell them and fix them, and I was in charge of that. At one point we had twenty cars on the road. In fact, it got to the point where the devotees used to call the cars "Anuttamobiles."

So that's where I learned about cars. I would dress the Deities in the morning, and then, among other things, I would work in the garage. The *pūjārī* auto-mechanic.

Use It For Kṛṣṇa

I moved out of New York in '75. And after a while I went to India and stayed there for two years, distributing books to libraries. (In India I didn't work on cars—you can get a mechanic cheap.) Then in 1980 I got married in Bombay.

After a while I came back to America. Now I was a householder and had a child . . . And I moved around for a while—West Virginia for one summer, Miami for one winter, and then even Toronto, trying to find my spot.

And it was in Toronto that I got introduced to the car business again. A devotee there, Rocana Dāsa, had a car dealership. And he had a license to go to the wholesale auctions. So that's where I got familiar with going to auctions and doing the car business.

But the economy just wasn't very good in Toronto. So I came back to Washington. And I started going to the auctions and got involved in it more. And pretty much from '85 till now I've just developed it into a very successful business. Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

It's not the be-all and end-all of life. You have to make a living. But if you're going to waste your time making a living, you might as well make a *good* living—and then you can use your money for something spiritual.

Business is just a means to survive. The real point is to use your wealth, your words, and your life for Kṛṣṇa.

There was a devotee in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* selling leaf cups and giving fifty percent of his income to worship the Ganges. Now, it's not that selling leaf cups was giving him great ecstasy. He had to do something to make a living, and then the money that he got he used in service to the Ganges. It's not that the essence of your life is the business of selling the leaf cup or selling the car or being a doctor or whatever you do to make a living. You have to do something—but the real pleasure comes in your devotional life.

And whatever you do—whether you make a little money or a lot of money—it's all the same. A job's a job.

Of course, some jobs are less pleasurable. I enjoy the car business because I don't have to associate with karmis. I do it all myself. I buy the car, I fix the car, I market the car. I don't have any employees, I don't have any boss. I can go take a break, go to the temple. I can do anything I want. So that's a good feature. "A *brāhmaṇa* doesn't work for others." In that sense, although it's a *vaiśya* [business] activity, it has a brahminical aspect.

My goal is to figure out how to make as much money as I can and then spend it for Kṛṣṇa. Besides doing cars, I own ten different properties, and do rentals . . . I figured it out the other day. If I sold all my houses, cashed in everything, and put all the money together, I've probably got at least a million dollars.

I moved out of the temple with twenty bucks in my pocket, and from that twenty bucks I made a million—and nobody helped me.

It's your karma. It's your destiny. Prahlāda Mahārāja says that happiness and distress come on their own. If you're going to be happy, you're going to be happy. That's how I see it.

And it doesn't affect me. Prabhupada said, rich or poor you still can eat only so many *capātīs* a day. I just have a formula that I work in, and if the formula stops working then I'll do something else. Maybe it will all blow up one day. Maybe the business will all go kapooey.

Whatever Kṛṣṇa sends us we have to use for Kṛṣṇa. And if by our good fortune or good karma we're successful at business, we have to recognize why and who's the proprietor and use it for Him.

You have to do what you can for Kṛṣṇa, while you've got the energy and funds to do it. And if you don't have the funds, just use your energy. Use your words, your money, your life. There are

(*please turn to page 58*)

EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

The worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

WORLD NEWS

North America

The earthquake that shook Los Angeles in January smashed decorative onyx arches and columns at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple to the floor, narrowly missing devotees gathered for early-morning worship. The quake struck at 4:31 A.M., just one minute after the worship had begun. Several devotees sprang up to the altar to steady the Deities. Had the quake hit a minute sooner, the altar doors would have been closed, and the Deities might have fallen; a minute later, and devotees would have been bowing, head to the floor, beneath chunks of falling onyx.

No devotees were hurt, and the temple and the buildings around it suffered no structural damage. Other damage to the temple, however, was extensive.

Amid the aftershocks directly following the quake, devotees brought the Deities for safety to the temple lawn, and later to a temple bus, where devotees served Them for several days, until the ground calmed down and the temple was cleaned of debris.

Photo courtesy *ISKCON World Review*

At the ISKCON temple outside Washington D.C., Dr. and Mrs. Suryakant Patel receive the "first place" trophy for sponsoring 216 Gītās *in honor of Gītā-jayanti.*

Members of ISKCON congregations in North America sponsored the distribution of 3,500 copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in December, in honor of Gītā-jayanti, the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

One thousand people attended the tenth annual festival of Dassehra (Vijayā Daśamī) last October at ISKCON Potomac, outside Washington, D.C. The festival commemorates Lord Rāmacandra's killing of the demon Rāvaṇa. The highlight of the Potomac festival: the burning of a thirty-foot effigy of Rāvaṇa.

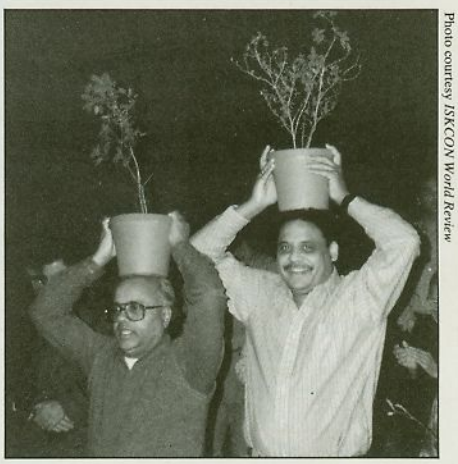


Photo courtesy *ISKCON World Review*

In Dallas, Thakor Mistry (left) and Navnit Hari carry Tulasī *to her new home.*

The first Tulasī temple in North America opened in December at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Dallas. Four hundred guests attended the ceremony.

Some two thousand guests took part in the annual Govardhana Pūjā festival held last November at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Houston. The festival celebrates Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. For the festival, devotees offered 800 preparations of food to the Deities.

The Nepali ambassador to the United States stayed as an honored guest of members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa community during his visit to Boston last December. The ambassador, Mr. Yog Prasad Upadhyaya, visited the ISKCON temple in Boston and resided at the home of Charlie Geer, a trustee of the ISKCON Foundation.

To get much of our news, *Back to Godhead* teams up with *ISKCON World Review,* the newspaper of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. For more detailed news, subscribe to *ISKCON World Review* (see page 59).

Devotees in New Orleans put on their annual Jagannātha Chariot Procession in February as part of the city's festivities for Mardis Gras.

ISKCON Atlanta will celebrate its annual Pāṇihāṭī rice-and-yogurt festival in June. For more information, check with ISKCON Atlanta.

The Festival of the Chariots will be held in cities throughout North America this summer. Contact your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

United Kingdom

Devotees at Bhaktivedanta Manor have been campaigning with full energy to save the Manor from being closed to the public by the local borough council. The closure was to have gone into effect on March 16. At press time we still had not heard whether efforts to keep the Manor open had succeeded.

Bhaktivedanta Manor organized a tour to India this past winter for members of its Patron Council and Manor Youth Forum. The group visited Māyāpur, Vṛndāvana, and various places in Gujarat.

London's Ahmadiyya Muslim Society invited ISKCON *sannyāsī* Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami to speak at its mosque about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When he spoke, those present were pleased to learn that he hails from the Punjabi city of Kapurthala, which has links with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. A friendly interreligious dialogue ensued, and many attending purchased copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is.*

Devotees are renovating their temple on Inis Rath, ISKCON's sixty-acre island in Northern Ireland. The building was constructed in 1860. The renovation is the first step in a plan to develop the whole island. The plan calls for a restaurant, forest walks, a *gurukula* school, a Vedic training college, a caravan park for visitors, and a community where devotee families can own their own land and houses.

Europe

Two devotees from ISKCON Belgrade spent a week last November in Banja Luka, Bosnia, passing out *prasādam*—3,500 cookies—to some 1,750 people, most of them elderly, orphaned, or wounded. The cookies were a rare treat; most people here have eaten only bread and rice for a year.

To get to Banja Luka, the devotees had to travel close to the front lines of war. They were helped by a man who became a devotee a year ago after a radio program he heard about devotees while in a trench.

Devotees from Germany and neighboring countries will converge at ISKCON's temple of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva in Bavaria on May 23 to celebrate the anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva's appearance. Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared as half-lion, half-man to protect His devotee Prahlāda.

Southwest Pacific

A Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Library opened at ISKCON Singapore in November, on the anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's passing. The library houses all the books by Śrīla Prabhupāda and many by his disciples.

Photo courtesy *ISKCON World Review*

Hare Krishna Food for Life in action in Managua, Nicaragua.

Devotees in Malaysia held four Rathayātrā festivals in four cities in December.

Central America

Devotees in Managua, Nicaragua, give out six hundred plates of Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* every Sunday. Nearly three quarters of the country's work force is unemployed.

Fifty thousand people attended the two-day Rathayātrā held last October in Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city.

Commonwealth of Independent States

Guards escorted devotees through a dark, stuffy Moscow prison on New Year's Eve. The devotees were there passing out 1,500 small books and 3,000 *prasādam* sweets to the surprised prisoners.

Devotees in Russia distributed more than one million large hardbound volumes of Vedic scripture in 1993.

India

Some 25,000 devotees in Madras took part in ISKCON's Jagannātha Chariot Festival in January. Among the related events: a special program with the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, long an admirer of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

More Jagannātha Chariot Festivals: Bangalore in January, Bombay in March. ISKCON Calcutta will hold its huge annual festival in July, at the same time as the festival in Jagannātha Purī.

Well over a thousand devotees from around the world gathered in April for ISKCON's annual Māyāpur-Vṛndāvana festival.

The annual rice-and-yogurt festival will be celebrated in June in Pāṇihāṭī, near Calcutta, sponsored by ISKCON's Calcutta center.

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā India

In March and April, the Padayātrā wound through the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The Padayātrā visited Ramesvaram (where Lord Rāmacandra and His monkey army crossed the Indian Ocean for Lanka), Madurai (renowned for its temple of the goddess Mīnākśī), and the city of Tiruchchirappalli.

At the beginning of May the Padayātrā will visit the pilgrimage city of Sri Rangam (the headquarters of the great teacher Rāmānuja and site of the temple of Raṅganātha). Then it will move north towards the state of Karnataka, where it will reach the state capital, Bangalore, by the beginning of June.

Padayātrā Europe

The European Padayātrā began in Ireland in 1990 and is making its way to Moscow. Here's the upcoming schedule:

Mid-May—Two weeks in Croatia
June—One month in Slovenia
July—Six to eight weeks in Hungary
September—Three weeks in Slovakia.

For more information about Padayātrā, contact:

Padayātrā Worldwide
62, Sant Nagar, New Delhi 110 065, India
Phone and fax: +91 (11) 647-0742

Padayātrā America
1111 Grand Ave., San Diego, CA 92109
Phone: +1 (619) 273-7262.

Padayātrā Europe
Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford, Herts. WD2 8EP, England. Phone: +44 (92) 385-7244

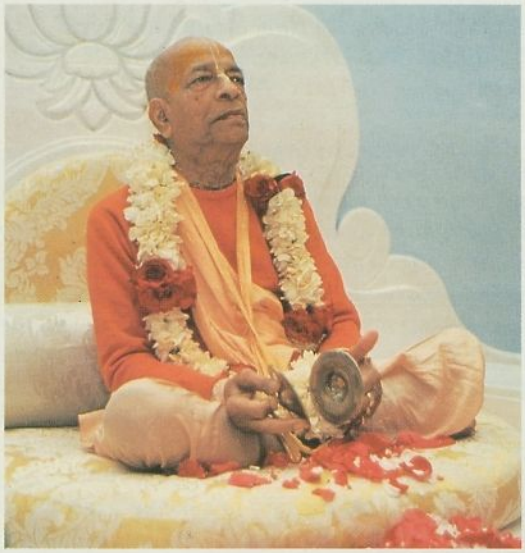
ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S CENTENNIAL—1996

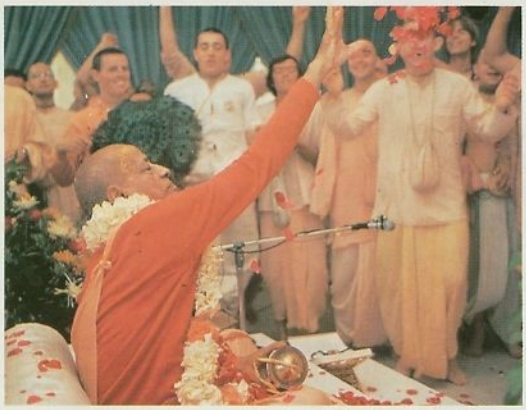
On September 24, devotees in France gathered at ISKCON's New Māyāpur Farm to launch France's Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Celebration. Devotees in France are focusing on eighteen projects to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda and push on his movement.

ISKCON Malaysia launched its Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Campaign on New Year's Day in Kuala Lumpur. Sriman Subramanium, president of the Hindu Sangam, was the guest of honor. One thousand guests attended the ceremonies.

ISKCON Assam launched its Prabhupāda Centennial Celebrations on January 9. The Chief Minister of Assam inaugurated the function.

Ambassador of the Spiritual World





At the ISKCON temple outside Washington, D.C. (top), Śrīla Prabhupāda plays karatālas *while his disciples worship him by offering flowers and singing a song in his honor. Above, Prabhupāda throws flowers to the devotees during the ceremony.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda visits Washington, D.C., to speak as the representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

by Hari Śauri Dāsa

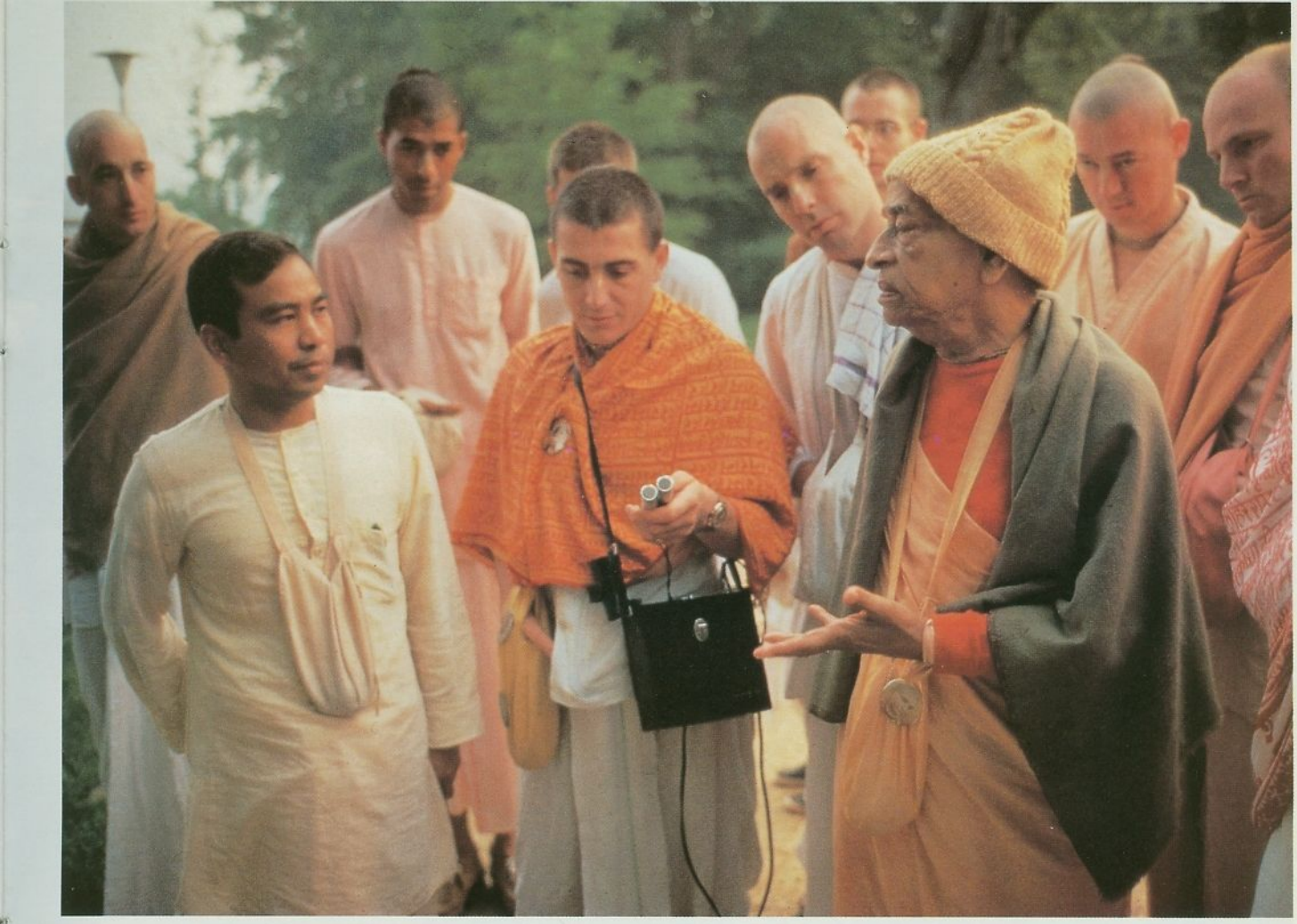
Excerpted from A Transcendental Diary—Volume Three. *Copyright Lotus Imprints. All rights reserved. Used with permission.*

July 2, 1976

A TWO-HOUR FLIGHT from Pittsburgh brought us into Washington, D.C., at 10:00 P.M. At the boarding gate were Rūpānuga Dāsa (the local GBC* representative), Bṛṣākapi Dāsa (the temple president), and Vipina Purandara Dāsa (vice president), who all enthusiastically greeted Śrīla Prabhupāda with garlands and obeisances.

Even at this hour of the night our book distributors were at work. Amid

*The GBC, or Governing Body Commission, serves as the highest board of management for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.



On an early-morning walk in Potomac (above), Śrīla Prabhupāda makes a point to his disciple Svarūpa Dāmodara Dāsa, a scientist. Hari Śauri Dāsa holds a microphone to record the exchange. At left, Prabhupāda teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness in his room at the Potomac temple.

the devotees stood a fresh-faced young soldier clutching a book he had just bought from Praghoṣa Dāsa, a top book seller. Realizing that Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived, Praghoṣa had invited the young man to come see Prabhupāda. As Prabhupāda went past, the soldier held up the book. Prabhupāda stopped momentarily, smiled at him, and said, "*Jaya*. Thank you."

A forty-minute drive took Prabhupāda to the ISKCON temple in the hills of Potomac, Maryland. Śrīla Prabhupāda was enlivened and talked almost all the way till we reached the temple. He was obviously inspired by being at the seat of government, with its many statues and memorials to great American thinkers and political mentors. But of course Śrīla Prabhupāda's angle of vision was unique. Americans celebrate Abraham Lincoln and keep a splendid Washington memorial in his honor, he said, but who knows where the person formerly known as Abraham Lincoln

Śrīla Prabhupāda leaves the temple after his morning lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

is now? Prabhupāda said people are satisfied to worship a famous person's memory but they do not consider where he has gone and what he has now become.

Vipina suggested that people actually want to worship Kṛṣṇa but they don't know how.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't think so. "They don't want to worship anyone. They want to worship their senses, that's all. Sense gratification. What is dictated by the senses, they agree to worship. Servant of the senses. In the material world no one worships anyone. Everyone serves his own senses. If the senses say, 'Do this,' he will do it. But in our movement we shall not hear the dictation of the senses; we shall do what Kṛṣṇa says. As long as I am carrying out the orders of the senses, then I am involved in material birth, death, transmigration."

Vipina informed Śrīla Prabhupāda of a man the book distributors had met in the airport recently. He is the author of a book called *The Fourth Kingdom.* He bought some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's

everyone has accepted the wrong authority.

"Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "because he's misled by sense gratification. So even if he approaches a guru, if the guru cannot satisfy his senses he doesn't like that. Because one is under the subjugation of the senses, he expects that the guru also will satisfy his senses—then he is guru. If the guru says something against sense gratification—'Ah, he is not guru.' "

Vipina said, "After he'd read your books, he wrote us a letter and said he thought you were a very intelligent man and would like to speak to you. So we'll see. Maybe he can hear."

Prabhupāda laughed. "Yes. We are speaking something not of this world. We are pointing out the defects of this world. 'This world' means the world of sense gratification."

Bṛṣākapi said the nondevotees ask, "What is the matter with sense gratification? I like sense gratification; it's very good."

"Very good," Prabhupāda said sardonically. "But can you continue it? They never think, 'I may be kicked out from my position at any moment. So what is the value of my sense gratification?' "

books and was impressed. He visited the temple, and the devotees have made an arrangement for him to come see Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda has agreed.

"He's very nice," Vipina said, "but he has some mixed-up ideas."

Prabhupāda chuckled. "Everyone has mixed-up ideas, because no one is properly trained. They have some ideas, they have some inquiries, but unless one comes to the right person he cannot be enlightened. Therefore one must approach the proper guru."

Rūpānuga said the problem was that

The car pulled into our property and stopped outside a white bungalow, Śrīla Prabhupāda's residence while he is here. We climbed out, and the devotees led Śrīla Prabhupāda into a spacious, well-appointed sitting room.

Narottamānanda Dāsa, who had cooked in Detroit when we were there, brought in a large tray of fresh cut fruit and some hot milk. Prabhupāda began to eat and at the same time distribute *mahā-prasādam* to everyone in the room. With the devotees gathered around, all eager to serve and please him, he basked in the warmth of their affection. He was grateful to the devotees for all their service.

"I take America as my fatherland. India is motherland, and here is fatherland." His face softened with a gentle smile, and he spoke with fondness. "So many fathers. My father was very affectionate to me. He would do everything for me. I lost one father, but now I have so many fathers."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood was touching. A father is taken as the provider. His Divine Grace is providing everything for us, yet he looks upon us as providing for him. Without him we would have no life to speak of, and yet he is gratified by even the smallest service. His humility and kindness expand his greatness and bind us all completely with love.

As he passed out some of the delicious *rasagullas,* Narottama asked, "Is there one for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

Prabhupāda laughed brightly. "Yes, I am not so foolish that I shall give everything."

July 3

After a quiet day the members of the Bhaktivedanta Institute (a group of scientists among Prabhupāda's disciples) gathered in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room in the early evening to present a slide show. It was the first meeting of the Institute with His Divine Grace. The slides they showed will be used to illustrate a book. Svarūpa Dāmodara Dāsa and Sadāpūta Dāsa designed the slide show so that it can also be used in college presentations on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Svarūpa Dāmodara began by asking Śrīla Prabhupāda to comment on the suitability of the proposed book.

The book holds that the existence of an Absolute Truth is axiomatic. Svarūpa Dāmodara explained that the book is meant to show philosophically the difference between life and matter. He said, "So this is Sāṅkhya philosophy. As Śrīla Prabhupāda comments in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Third Canto, the Sāṅkhya philosophy is especially meant for persons conditioned by this material world. By understanding the science of devotional service and Sāṅkhya philosophy, one can become free from the modes of material nature.

"We want to propose that to understand the distinction between life and

"The original source of everything is given in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He is experienced. He knows everything. So the origin of everything cannot be dead."

• • •

matter one must have at least some idea of the Absolute Truth. Otherwise, the difference between life and matter is impossible to understand. That is why scientists nowadays are so confused about life and matter."

Even before seeing the slides, Śrīla Prabhupāda had significant comments to make about the axiomatic nature of the Absolute Truth. "That Absolute Truth is explained in the *Vedānta-sūtra—janmādy asya yataḥ.* The Absolute Truth is that from which everything comes into existence. Now, that has been discussed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* because *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* by the same author. He begins, *janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārteśv abhijñaḥ.* This word—*abhijñaḥ* (all-knowing)—is used. The Absolute Truth is not dead matter. For example, when a mother gives birth to a child, she knows everything—how the child was born of the womb, how it developed, how it is coming. At least on the whole she knows everything. Similarly, the original source of everything is given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Abhijñaḥ.* He is experienced. He knows everything. So the origin of everything cannot be dead."

The scientists showed one slide after another, and Prabhupāda gave his comments and clarifications.

One of the opening slides, detailing the structure of theory, stated that there are two types of axioms: logical and theoretical. Svarūpa Dāmodara explained that especially in mathematics all theories are developed from axioms, starting points for which there are no proofs. Svarūpa Dāmodara said that the book's opening premise, that the existence of an Absolute Truth should be accepted as axiomatic, therefore lies entirely within the realms of science.

He showed a slide comparing the features of matter and life. This rested on statements of scripture because, as he pointed out, material science fails to separate matter from life and thus cannot make such a comparison. One of the points on this slide stated that life is complex whereas matter, per se, is simple. This means, he said, that if no life is present, a complex combination of matter, such as the body of a living being, breaks down into much simpler structures.

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda's secretary, wondered how our devotee scientists could state with certainty that the soul is complex by nature.

"We get information that the spiritual world is full of variegatedness," Svarūpa Dāmodara explained. "It is not just oneness. It is full of varieties. So we take that as proof of the complex nature of life."

Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. "We see that as long as life is in the material body the person has varieties of thoughts. That is proof that life is full of varieties. As soon as life is not there, no more varieties. Only one variety—dead body, that's all. Finished. And as long as life is there, a person has so many ideas, so many arts, so many philosophies. That is proof that life is full of varieties."

Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that the *Vedānta-sūtra* is entirely axiomatic. It states that the soul is blissful by nature. "And variety is the mother of enjoyment. Just like this bunch of flowers. When there are varieties of flowers, it becomes a very enjoyable bunch. If you simply bring a rose, although it is very valuable it is not so enjoyable. But when there are small, insignificant leaves also, the rose becomes more beautiful. That is life. And who appreciates it? A living person. A dead man cannot appreciate this beauty."

After nearly three hours, although there were more slides to see, Prabhupāda called a halt. Although tired, he was enlivened by the serious efforts his men are making to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness from a scientific standpoint. He encouraged them to continue and to go out and propagate their work.

"Kṛṣṇa will bless you. Push this scientific movement. Go to every university, every college. How are they receiving this in the college circles?"

Sadāpūta told him they had lectured in the university in Gainesville, Florida, and even given some TV interviews. Prabhupāda asked what had been the reaction.

"Well, in the class, at first the professor said, 'That's completely fallacious.' But he quieted down," Sadāpūta said.

Śrīla Prabhupāda grinned. "Yes, they will say like that—'fallacious'—but you have to make them quiet down."

This ended the meeting on a jolly note.

As everyone packed up to go, Śrīla Prabhupāda, always considerate and never neglectful, told me to give everyone *prasādam.* He turned to Rakṣaṇa Dāsa, who had stood unobtrusively at Prabhupāda's side throughout the session, fanning Prabhupāda with a peacock fan.

"Give him twice," Prabhupāda said. "He has worked very hard. Double. You should give him double."

Rakṣaṇa beamed with pleasure at having gained his spiritual master's recognition, compared to which the *prasādam* was simply an added bonus.

It was a typically personal gesture from His Divine Grace. Although absorbed in discussing the highest philosophical and technically scientific subjects with some of his most qualified men, he did not neglect the humble and simple service of another disciple.

Hari Śauri Dāsa was Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal servant from November 1975 to March 1977. He is publishing the detailed dairy he kept during that time. Volume one and volume two are available now, and volume three will be available in August. *To order see page 59.*

CUTTING THE KNOTS OF ATTACHMENT

Rendered from Sanskrit into English,
with commentary,
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is teaching His mother, Devahūti, the philosophical system known as Sāṅkhya. As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam *continues, Lord Kapila describes some of the qualities of the Supreme Lord.*

THIRD CANTO / CHAPTER 26

2 ज्ञानं निःश्रेयसार्थाय पुरुषस्यात्मदर्शनम् ।
यदाहुर्वर्णये तत्ते हृदयग्रन्थिभेदनम् ॥ २ ॥

jñānaṁ niḥśreyasārthāya
puruṣasyātma-darśanam
yad āhur varṇaye tat te
hṛdaya-granthi-bhedanam

jñānam—knowledge; *niḥśreyasa-arthāya*—for the ultimate perfection; *puruṣasya*—of a man; *ātma-darśanam*—self-realization; *yat*—which; *āhuḥ*—they said; *varṇaye*—I shall explain; *tat*—that; *te*—to you; *hṛdaya*—in the heart; *granthi*—the knots; *bhedanam*—cuts.

Knowledge is the ultimate perfection of self-realization. I shall explain that knowledge unto you by which the knots of attachment to the material world are cut.

PURPORT: It is said that by proper understanding of the pure self, or by self-realization, one can be freed from material attachment. Knowledge leads one to attain the ultimate perfection of life and to see oneself as he is. The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8) also confirms this. *Tam eva viditvāti-mṛtyum eti:* simply by understanding one's spiritual position, or by seeing oneself as he is, one can be freed from material entanglement. In various ways, the seeing of oneself is described in the Vedic literatures, and it is confirmed in the *Bhāgavatam* (*puruṣasya ātma-darśanam*) that one has to see oneself and know what he is. As Kapiladeva explains to His mother, this "seeing" can be done by hearing from the proper authoritative source. Kapiladeva is the greatest authority because He is the Personality of Godhead, and if someone accepts whatever is explained *as it is,* without interpretation, then he can see himself.

Lord Caitanya explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī the real constitutional position of the individual. He said directly that each and every individual soul is eternally a servitor of Kṛṣṇa. *Jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣnera 'nitya-dāsa':* every individual soul is eternally a servitor. When one is fixed in the understanding that he is part and parcel of the Supreme Soul and that his eternal position is to serve in association with the Supreme Lord, he becomes self-realized. This position of rightly understanding oneself cuts the knot of material attraction (*hṛdaya-granthi-bhedanam*). Due to false ego, or false identification of oneself with the body and the material world, one is entrapped by *māyā,* but as soon as one understands that he is qualitatively the same substance as the Supreme Lord because he belongs to the same category of spirit soul, and that his perpetual position is to serve, one attains *ātma-darśanam* and *hṛdaya-granthi-bhedanam,* self-realization. When one can cut the knot of

attachment to the material world, his understanding is called knowledge. *Ātma-darśanam* means to see oneself by knowledge; therefore, when one is freed from the false ego by the cultivation of real knowledge, he sees himself, and that is the ultimate necessity of human life. The soul is thus isolated from the entanglement of the twenty-four categories of material nature. Pursuit of the systematic philosophic process called Sāṅkhya is called knowledge and self-revelation.

3 अनादिरात्मा पुरुषो निर्गुणः प्रकृतेः परः ।
प्रत्यग्धामा स्वयंज्योतिर्विश्वं येन समन्वितम् ॥ ३ ॥

anādir ātmā puruṣo
nirguṇaḥ prakṛteḥ parah
pratyag-dhāmā svayaṁ-jyotir
viśvaṁ yena samanvitam

anādiḥ—without a beginning; *ātmā*—the Supreme Soul; *puruṣaḥ*—the Personality of Godhead; *nirguṇaḥ*—transcendental to the material modes of nature; *prakṛteḥ paraḥ*—beyond this material world; *pratyak-dhāmā*—perceivable everywhere; *svayaṁ-jyotiḥ*—self-effulgent; *viśvam*—the entire creation; *yena*—by whom; *samanvitam*—is maintained.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.

PURPORT: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as being without beginning. He is *puruṣa,* the Supreme Spirit. *Puruṣa* means "person." When we think of a person in our present experience, that person has a beginning. This means that he has taken birth and that there is a history from the beginning of his life. But the Lord is particularly mentioned here as *anādi,* beginningless. If we examine all persons, we will find that everyone has a beginning, but when we approach a person who has no beginning, He is the Supreme Person. That is the definition given in the *Brahma-saṁhitā. Iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ:* the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa, the supreme controller; He is without beginning, and He is the beginning of everyone. This definition is found in all Vedic literatures.

The Lord is described as the soul, or spirit. What is the definition of spirit? Spirit is perceivable everywhere. Brahman means "great." His greatness is perceived everywhere. And what is that greatness? Consciousness. We have personal experience of consciousness, for it is spread all over the body; in every hair follicle of our body we can feel consciousness. This is individual consciousness. Similarly, there is superconsciousness. The example can be given of a small light and the sunlight. The sunlight is perceived everywhere, even within the room or in the sky, but the small light is experienced within a specific limit. Similarly, our consciousness is perceived within the limit of our particular body, but the superconsciousness, or the existence of God, is perceived everywhere. He is present everywhere by His energy. It is stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* that whatever we find, anywhere and everywhere, is the distribution of the energy of the Supreme Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also it is confirmed that the Lord is all-pervading and exists everywhere by His two kinds of energy, one spiritual and the other material. Both the spiritual and material energies are spread everywhere, and that is the proof of the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The existence of consciousness everywhere is not temporary. It is without beginning, and because it is without beginning, it is also without end. The theory that consciousness develops at a certain stage of material combination is not accepted herein, for the consciousness which exists everywhere is said to be without beginning. The materialistic or atheistic theory stating that there is no soul, that there is no God and that consciousness is the result of a combination of matter is not acceptable. Matter is not beginningless; it has a beginning. As this material body has a beginning, the universal body does also. And as our material body has begun on the basis of our soul, the entire gigantic universal body has begun on the basis of the Supreme Soul. The *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *janmādy asya.* This entire material exhibition—its creation, its growth, its maintenance and its dissolution—is an emanation from the Supreme Person. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also, the Lord says, "I am the beginning, the source of birth of everything."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is described here. He is not a temporary person, nor does He have a beginning. He is without a cause, and He is the cause of all causes. *Paraḥ* means "transcendental," "beyond the creative energy." The Lord is the creator of the creative energy. We can see that there is a creative energy in the material world, but He is not under this energy. He is *prakṛti-paraḥ,* beyond this energy. He is not subjected to the threefold miseries created by the material energy, because He is beyond it. The modes of material nature do not touch Him. It is explained here, *svayaṁ-jyotiḥ:* He is light Himself. We have experience in the material world of one light's being a reflection of another, just as moonlight is a reflection of the sunlight. Sunlight is also the reflection of the *brahmajyoti.* Similarly, *brahmajyoti,* the spiritual effulgence, is a reflection of the body of the Supreme Lord. This is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā: yasya prabhā prabhavataḥ.* The *brahmajyoti,* or Brahman effulgence, is due to His bodily luster. Therefore it is said here, *svayaṁ-jyotiḥ:* He Himself is light. His light is distributed in different ways, as the *brahmajyoti,* as sunlight and as moonlight. *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that in the spiritual world there is no need of sunlight, moonlight or electricity. The *Upaniṣads* also confirm this; because the bodily luster of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sufficient to illuminate the spiritual world, there is no need

of sunlight, moonlight or any other light or electricity. This self-illumination also contradicts the theory that the spirit soul, or the spiritual consciousness, develops at a certain point in material combination. The term *svayaṁ-jyotiḥ* indicates that there is no tinge of anything material or any material reaction. It is confirmed here that the concept of the Lord's all-pervasiveness is due to His illumination everywhere. We have experience that the sun is situated in one place but the sunlight is diffused all around for millions and millions of miles. That is our practical experience. Similarly, although the supreme light is situated in His personal abode, Vaikuṇṭha or Vṛndāvana, His light is diffused not only in the spiritual world but beyond that. In the material world also, that light is reflected by the sun globe, and the sunlight is reflected by the moon globe. Thus although He is situated in His own abode, His light is distributed all over the spiritual and material worlds. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37) confirms this. *Goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūtaḥ:* He is living in Goloka, but still He is present all over the creation. He is the Supersoul of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He has innumerable transcendental qualities. It is also concluded that although He is undoubtedly a person, He is not a *puruṣa* of this material world. Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand that beyond this material world there can be a person; therefore they are impersonalists. But it is explained very nicely here that the Personality of Godhead is beyond material existence.

4 स एष प्रकृतिं सूक्ष्मां दैवीं गुणमयीं विभुः ।
यदृच्छयैवोपगतामभ्यपद्यत लीलया ॥ ४ ॥

sa eṣa prakṛtiṁ sūkṣmāṁ
daivīṁ guṇamayīṁ vibhuḥ
yadṛcchayaivopagatām
abhyapadyata līlayā

saḥ eṣaḥ—that same Supreme Personality of Godhead; *prakṛtim*—material energy; *sūkṣmām*—subtle; *daivīm*—related to Viṣṇu; *guṇamayīm*—invested with the three modes of material nature; *vibhuḥ*—the greatest of the great; *yadṛcchayā*—of His own will; *iva*—quite; *upagatām*—obtained; *abhyapadyata*—He accepted; *līlayā*—as His pastime.

As His pastime, that Supreme Personality of Godhead, the greatest of the great, accepted the subtle material energy, which is invested with three material modes of nature and which is related with Viṣṇu.

PURPORT: In this verse the word *guṇamayīm* is very significant. *Daivīm* means "the energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead," and *guṇamayīm* means "invested with the three modes of material nature." When the material energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears, this *guṇamayīm* energy acts as a manifestation of the energies of the three modes; it acts as a covering. The energy emanated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests in two ways—as an emanation from the Supreme Lord and as a covering of the Lord's face. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that because the whole world is illusioned by the three modes of material nature, the common conditioned soul, being covered by such energy, cannot see the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The example of a cloud is very nicely given. All of a sudden there may appear a big cloud in the sky. This cloud is perceived in two ways. To the sun the cloud is a creation of its energy, but to the ordinary common man in the conditioned state, it is a covering to the eyes; because of the cloud, the sun cannot be seen. It is not that the sun is actually covered by the cloud; only the vision of the ordinary being is covered. Similarly, although *māyā* cannot cover the Supreme Lord, who is beyond *māyā,* the material energy covers the ordinary living entities. Those conditioned souls who are covered are individual living entities, and He from whose energy *māyā* is created is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In another place in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* in the First Canto, Seventh Chapter, it is stated that Vyāsadeva, by his spiritual vision, saw the Supreme Lord and the material energy standing behind Him. This indicates that material energy cannot cover the Lord, just as darkness cannot cover the sun. Darkness can cover a jurisdiction which is very insignificant in comparison to that of the sun. Darkness can cover a small cave, but not the open sky. Similarly, the covering capacity of the material energy is limited and cannot act on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is therefore called *vibhu.* As the appearance of a cloud is accepted by the sun, so the appearance of the material energy at a certain interval is accepted by the Lord. Although His material energy is utilized to create the material world, this does not mean that He is covered by that energy. Those who are covered by the material energy are called conditioned souls. The Lord accepts the material energy for His material pastimes in creation, maintenance and dissolution. But the conditioned soul is covered; he cannot understand that beyond this material energy there is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the cause of all causes, just as a less intelligent person cannot understand that beyond the covering of the clouds there is bright sunshine.

5 गुणैर्विचित्राः सृजतीं सरूपाः प्रकृतिं प्रजाः ।
विलोक्य मुमुहे सद्यः स इह ज्ञानगूहया ॥ ५ ॥

guṇair vicitrāḥ sṛjatīṁ
sa-rūpāḥ prakṛtiṁ prajāḥ
vilokya mumuhe sadyaḥ
sa iha jñāna-gūhayā

guṇaiḥ—by the threefold modes; *vicitrāḥ*—variegated; *sṛjatīm*—creating; *sa-rūpāḥ*—with forms; *prakṛtim*—material nature; *prajāḥ*—living entities; *vilokya*—having seen; *mumuhe*—was illusioned; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *saḥ*—the

living entity; *iha*—in this world; *jñāna-gūhayā*—by the knowledge-covering feature.

Divided into varieties by her threefold modes, material nature creates the forms of the living entities, and the living entities, seeing this, are illusioned by the knowledge-covering feature of the illusory energy.

PURPORT: Material energy has the power to cover knowledge, but this covering cannot be applied to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is applicable only to the *prajāḥ,* or those who are born with material bodies, the conditioned souls. The different kinds of living entities vary according to the modes of material nature, as explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literature. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.12) it is very nicely explained that although the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance are born of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is not subject to them. In other words, the energy emanating from the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot act on Him; it acts on the conditioned souls, who are covered by the material energy. The Lord is the father of all living entities because He impregnates material energy with the conditioned souls. Therefore, the conditioned souls get bodies created by the material energy, whereas the father of the living entities is aloof from the three modes.

It is stated in the previous verse that the material energy was accepted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in order that He might exhibit pastimes for the living entities who wanted to enjoy and lord it over the material energy. This world was created through the material energy of the Lord for the so-called enjoyment of such living entities. Why this material world was created for the sufferings of the conditioned souls is a very intricate question. There is a hint in the previous verse in the word *līlayā,* which means "for the pastimes of the Lord." The Lord wants to rectify the enjoying temperament of the conditioned souls. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that no one is the enjoyer but the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This material energy is created, therefore, for anyone who pretends to enjoy. An example can be cited here that there is no necessity for the government's creation of a separate police department, but because it is a fact that some of the citizens will not accept the state laws, a department to deal with criminals is necessary. There is no necessity, but at the same time there is a necessity. Similarly, there was no necessity to create this material world for the sufferings of the conditioned souls, but at the same time there are certain living entities, known as *nitya-baddha,* who are eternally conditioned. We say that they have been conditioned from time immemorial because no one can trace out when the living entity, the part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, became rebellious against the supremacy of the Lord.

It is a fact that there are two classes of men—those who are obedient to the laws of the Supreme Lord and those who are atheists or agnostics, who do not accept the existence of God and who want to create their own laws. They want to establish that everyone can create his own laws or his own religious path. Without tracing out the beginning of the existence of these two classes, we can take it for granted that some of the living entities revolted against the laws of the Lord. Such entities are called conditioned souls, for they are conditioned by the three modes of material nature. Therefore the words *guṇair vicitrāḥ* are used here.

In this material world there are 8,400,000 species of life. As spirit souls, they are all transcendental to this material world. Why, then, do they exhibit themselves in different stages of life? The answer is given here: they are under the spell of the three modes of material nature. Because they were created by the material energy, their bodies are made of the material elements. Covered by the material body, the spiritual identity is lost, and therefore the word *mumuhe* is used here, indicating that they have forgotten their own spiritual identity. This forgetfulness of spiritual identity is present in the *jīvas,* or souls, who are conditioned, being subject to be covered by the energy of material nature. *Jñāna-gūhayā* is another word used. *Gūhā* means "covering." Because the knowledge of the minute conditioned souls is covered, they are exhibited in so many species of life. It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Seventh Chapter, First Canto, "The living entities are illusioned by the material energy." In the *Vedas* also it is stated that the eternal living entities are covered by different modes and that they are called tricolored—red, white and blue—living entities. Red is the representation of the mode of passion, white is the representation of the mode of goodness, and blue is the representation of the mode of ignorance. These modes of material nature belong to the material energy, and therefore the living entities under these different modes of material nature have different kinds of material bodies. Because they are forgetful of their spiritual identities, they think the material bodies to be themselves. To the conditioned soul, "me" means the material body. This is called *moha,* or bewilderment.

It is repeatedly said in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is never affected by the influence of material nature. It is, rather, the conditioned souls, or the minute infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme, who are affected by the influence of material nature and who appear in different bodies under the material modes.

(*continued in the next issue*)

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

LET US JOIN TOGETHER

The following conversation took place in London, England, on August 14, 1971.

Guest: We say Jesus Christ.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But Jesus Christ never said that he is God. He said "son of God." We have no objection to chanting the holy name of Jesus Christ. We are preaching, "Chant the holy name of God." If you haven't got any name of God, then you can chant our conception of the name of God, Kṛṣṇa. But we don't say only Kṛṣṇa.

nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

Lord Caitanya says that there are many names of God but in every name of God the full potency of God is there. And there is no hard and fast rule for chanting the holy name of God. Anyone, anywhere, at any time, in any circumstance can chant.

Lord Caitanya says, "My Lord, You are so merciful that in this age—every age—You are always present in full potency in Your name. And I can associate with You simply by chanting Your holy name. But I am so unfortunate I have no attraction for that."

Now people are being taught to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Where is the loss? If I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, where is the loss? And where is the want of time? They [my disciples] are walking on the street chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. I am sitting here, and now I'm talking with you. But as soon as I finish talking, I shall chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

So where is the difficulty? But ask people to chant the holy name of God, and they will not accept. Unfortunate. And it is such a simple thing. They don't have to go to a church or temple. It doesn't matter if they are in hell or heaven. In any condition they can chant the holy name of God. But they're so unfortunate, they won't accept this theory. *Etādṛśī tava kṛpā.* "God is so merciful, but I am so unfortunate that I cannot chant His holy name."

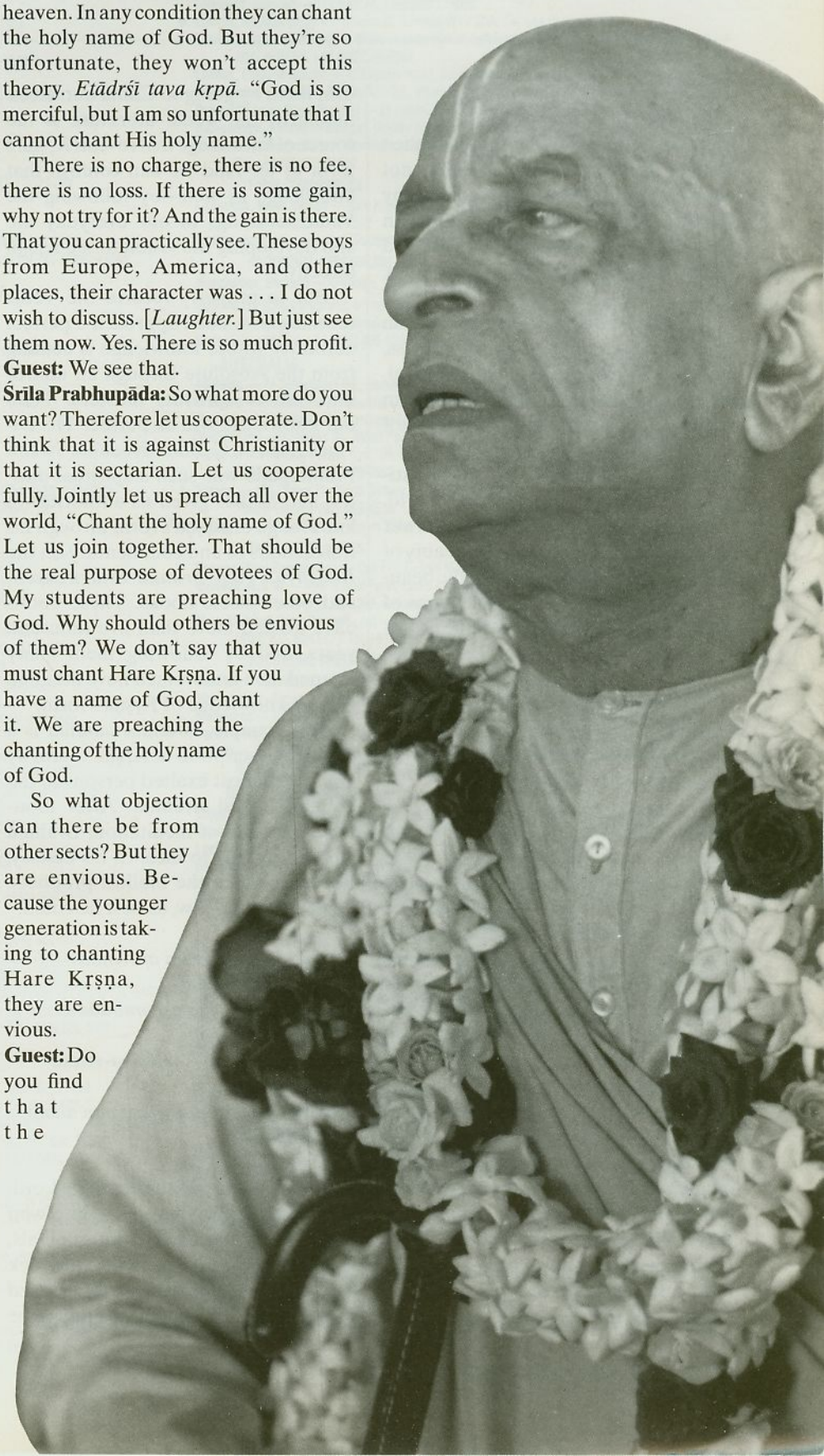
There is no charge, there is no fee, there is no loss. If there is some gain, why not try for it? And the gain is there. That you can practically see. These boys from Europe, America, and other places, their character was . . . I do not wish to discuss. [*Laughter.*] But just see them now. Yes. There is so much profit.

Guest: We see that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So what more do you want? Therefore let us cooperate. Don't think that it is against Christianity or that it is sectarian. Let us cooperate fully. Jointly let us preach all over the world, "Chant the holy name of God." Let us join together. That should be the real purpose of devotees of God. My students are preaching love of God. Why should others be envious of them? We don't say that you must chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. If you have a name of God, chant it. We are preaching the chanting of the holy name of God.

So what objection can there be from other sects? But they are envious. Because the younger generation is taking to chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, they are envious.

Guest: Do you find that the



chant goes on in your heart?
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why not?
Guest: It goes deeper and deeper?
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Everything we hear goes to the heart. If someone calls me a bad name, does it not go to my heart? "You rascal. You stupid." When I hear that, does it not go to my heart? Why do I become angry unless it goes to my heart? If "rascal," "stupid," and all these bad names go to my heart, why won't God's name go to my heart?
Guest: I'm sometimes saying a little prayer.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: So if you repeatedly chant it, it will remain. It will always remain in your heart.
Guest: Always going on.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. There is no chance of escape. Chant constantly, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. It will remain in your heart.

IDOL WORSHIP

(*continued from page 23*)

worshiping His form and give explicit details on how to carve *Deities,* not idols, in His supreme image. He may become jealous when we fashion an image of a lesser god, but He is pleased when we worship *Him* in His Deity form.

The form of Kṛṣṇa—with His bluish hue, lotus eyes, blooming youthfulness, and pearl-white smile—is not fanciful. It is not an *image,* because it is not an *imagined,* or concocted, form. It is not created by an artist, a philosopher, or a mundane poet after seeing the beautiful panorama of the material world. Anthropomorphic ideas don't answer the question "Where does the beauty of nature come from?" Actually, the beautiful things of nature are reflections of Kṛṣṇa's original beauty. He is the prototype, as He explains in the *Gītā* (10.41):

yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ
śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ
mama tejo-'ṁśa-sambhavam

"Know that all opulent, beautiful, and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendor." Kṛṣṇa's form is not anthropomorphic—rather our form is *theomorphic,* fashioned after Kṛṣṇa's form. We are made in the image of God.

Now someone might ask, "Why do you accept the statements in the Vedic literature about the form of God?"

If we reflect for a moment, we can understand that every day we accept the statements of superior authorities on subjects we know nothing about. For instance, few of us have ever visited mainland China, yet we believe that it exists and that a billion people live there. We believe reports about China from magazines, newspapers, radio, and television. They are the sources of our knowledge, and if we wish we can confirm them by going to China ourselves. Similarly, the Vedic literature is the source of knowledge that reveals Kṛṣṇa's form to us. And we can confirm that knowledge as well—by following the Vedic teachings in our everyday life and developing the vision to see Kṛṣṇa directly.

But to properly receive the Vedic teachings, we must approach a perfect authority whose knowledge is coming from the Absolute through an unbroken line of spiritual masters. Then our knowledge will be perfect. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was such a spiritual master, and he has given us authoritative knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's form through his translations of and commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and other Vedic books. These books have existed more than five thousand years, and by following them many learned men and women have attained perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's form.

For example, *Brahma-saṁhitā* is a detailed description of Kṛṣṇa's form by one of the most exalted persons in the universe, Lord Brahmā. After thousands of years of meditation, Brahmā met Kṛṣṇa face to face. In his ecstasy, Brahmā, unlike the biblical prophets, related what he saw, as best he could:

veṇuṁ kvaṇantam aravinda-
dalāyatākṣaṁ
barhāvataṁsam asitāmbuda-
sundarāṅgam
kandarpa-koṭi-kaminīya-viśeṣa-
śobhaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ
bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has blooming eyes like lotus petals, whose head is bedecked with a peacock feather, whose figure of beauty is tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness charms millions of cupids." (Bs. 5.30)

aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti
paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti
ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjvala-vigrahasya
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ
bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, and substantiality, and who is full of the most dazzling splendor. Each limb of that transcendental figure possesses in itself the full-fledged functions of all the other organs, and He eternally sees, maintains, and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane." (Bs. 5.32)

Experts in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness have carried the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's form through an unbroken disciplic succession. They encourage us to test the methods they prescribe and to experience unlimited pleasure by seeing Kṛṣṇa's form ourselves, first in the Deity, and then within every atom. This is ideal worship, not idol worship.

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The History of Greater India

The Seeds of Duryodhana's Hatred

Translated from Sanskrit
by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

• • •

After the death of King Pāṇḍu, his sons, the Pāṇḍavas, were raised as princes under the care of their blind uncle, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and their grandfather Bhīṣma. As the Mahābhārata *continues, the sage Vaiśampāyana tells how the Pāṇḍava Bhīma invoked the resentment of one of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons.*

THE PĀṆḌAVAS were trained in all the Vedic reformatory ceremonies meant to sanctify human life, and they steadily grew, enjoying all the pleasures of a princely life. Living in their father's house, they played with the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and in all the games children play, the Pāṇḍavas excelled their cousins. In eating, racing, hitting a target, and raising dust, Bhīmasena soundly defeated all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. As the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra played, Bhīmasena would joyfully grab them by the tufts of hair above their ears, and holding their heads down, the Pāṇḍava boy would have them fight one another.

All the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were very powerful boys, trained and destined to be fighters and kings. But Vṛkodara, Bhīma, all alone, would push and defeat them all with little trouble, even though they numbered 101. With great strength he would grab them by their legs, pull them down, and drag them yelling on the ground, scraping their knees, heads, and faces. When the boys played in the water, Bhīma would embrace ten of them with his arms, remain submerged in the water until they almost drowned, and then release them. When they would climb a tree to collect fruits, Bhīma would strike the tree with his foot and make it shake so forcefully that the dizzy boys would fall with their armfuls of fruit. In combat, in racing, in

Left: Playful yet powerful, Bhīma fights singlehandedly with the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Illustrations by Puṣkara Dāsa

drills and gymnastics, the boys could never win against Bhīma.

Although Bhīma always competed with his cousins, he had no desire to hurt them. Rather, he acted with boyish enthusiasm. But his cousins developed a terrible hatred for him, which he in no way felt toward them. Seeing that Bhīma was becoming renowned for his strength, one fierce warrior son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra began to show a wicked attitude toward Bhīma. As the sons of Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra became young men, this son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra turned away from virtue and began to contemplate evil deeds. So deluded was he by greed for power that his mind became sinful.

"Bhīma is the mightiest of men," he thought. "Since I cannot kill him fairly, I will destroy by trickery the middle son of Kuntī and Pāṇḍu. Then, by capturing and locking up his elder brother, Yudhiṣṭhira, and his younger brother Arjuna, I shall rule the earth and all its riches."

Having made up his mind, that sinful man named Duryodhana began to look constantly for opportunities to assasinate the great soul Bhīmasena.

For water sports, O Bhārata, Duryodhana had large, colorful tents set up on a bank of the Ganges near Pramāṇakoṭi. All the cousins went there. When their play was finished, they put on fresh clothes and attractive jewelry and silently enjoyed heaping plates of sumptuous food that satisfied all their desires. When day was done, the Kuru princes, exhausted from a long day of sports, eagerly entered their tents to rest. Even mighty Bhīma was fatigued, having won all the contests and games. That powerful prince had carried all the other boys during their games in the water. Eager to bed down for the night, he climbed up on the raised earth where their tents were built, and slept on the fertile land of Pramāṇa-koṭi. Tired, and dizzy from drinking, O king, the son of Pāṇḍu, dressed in white cloth, slept unmoving, like a dead body.

Duryodhana silently approached Bhīma in the black of night and bound him with strong cords made from crawling plants. He pushed Bhīma off the camping plateau into the deep water below as it rushed by with fearful force, like that of Bhīma himself. Waking up within the rushing waves of the Ganges, the son of Kuntī, the best of fighters, snapped the binding cords and climbed out of the water.

Another time, while Bhīma slept Duryodhana brought highly venemous serpents, with sharp fangs and furious mood, and had them bite deeply into the weak and mortal parts of Bhīma's body. But even when those terrible serpents angrily sank their fangs into the softest parts of Bhīma's body, they could not pierce his skin, for his broad-chested body was as hard as iron. Bhīma then awoke and crushed all the snakes, and in the process struck his favorite chariot driver with the back of his hand.

Bhīma awakens within the rushing waters of the Ganges and breaks the strong cords with which Duryodhana has bound him.

Another time, Duryodhana threw into Bhīma's food fresh Kālakūṭa poison, so deadly that to hear about it makes one's hair stand on end. Yuyutsu, son of a *vaiśya* mother, wanted to save the sons of Pārtha, so he told them what had happened. But Bhīma had already eaten the food, and without suffering any effect, he simply digested it.

So by various schemes and plots, Duryodhana, Karṇa, and Śakuni, son of Subala, tried to assasinate the sons of Pāṇḍu. O tamer of the foe, the Pāṇḍavas discerned all that was happening, but staunchly fol-

King Śantanu sees the twin children of Śaradvān lying alone in the forest.

lowing the advice of Vidura, they did not expose their knowledge.

Seeing that the children's play was becoming too violent, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra looked for a *guru* to educate the boys. He eventually turned them over to Gautama, also known as Kṛpa, a master of the Vedic literature, who had taken birth from a clump of grass.

The Story of Kṛpa

King Janamejaya said:

Great *brāhmaṇa,* kindly explain to me Kṛpa's origin. How could he take birth from a clump of grass, and how did he acquire his expert knowledge of weapons?

Śrī Vaiśampāyana said:

O mighty king, once the great seer Gautama had a son who was born with arrows and hence was named Śaradvān. The child was inspired to study the Vedic texts that teach the military science rather than study the religious texts. Just as by austerity religious scholars master the *Vedas,* so by serious austerity did that child acquire expertise in all kinds of weapons. Wholly dedicated to the *Dhanur Veda* (the military science) and empowered by endless austerities, the son of Gautama greatly disturbed Lord Indra, king of the gods. O Kaurava, Indra then dispatched a heavenly maiden named Jālapadī, telling her, "You must go and break the austierities of that sage!"

Jālapadī approached the charming hermitage of Śaradvān and found him standing with bow and arrows in hand. She enticed him. Seeing the Apsarā maiden, who had but a single cloth to cover a figure unmatched in this world, the son of Gautama stared with wide-open eyes. His prized bow and arrows slipped from his hands and fell to the ground, for simply seeing her made his whole body tremble. Because of his continuous austerities, he had developed very heavy spiritual knowledge, and with his utmost self-discipline that sage of great learning stood his ground. But with the sudden transformations in his body, Śaradvan unknowingly discharged semen, which fell into a clump of reeds. He then left behind his hermitage, and the woman and went away. Having fallen into a clump of reeds, the semen divided into two, O king, and thus twins were born of Śaradvān, son of Gautama.

Śantanu Finds The Twins

Once when King Śantanu was hunting, one of his soldiers happened to see the twins lying in the forest. Seeing too the bow and arrows that had fallen there, and also the black deer skins, the soldier determined the children to be offspring of a *brāhmaṇa* who had mastered the *Dhanur Veda.* He showed the twins and the arrows to the

king, who was filled with compassion. Taking the twins, the king went back to his home. "These two shall be my own children," he said. He raised them carefully and engaged them in the purifying religious rites. Meanwhile, Śaradvān, son of Gautama, having escaped the wiles of the Apsarā maiden, rededicated himself to the military science.

The king thought, "I have carefully raised these two children out of a sense of mercy," and so he named the male child Kṛpa ("mercy"), and the female Kṛpī ("lady mercy").

By his powerful austerities, Śaradvān, the son of Gautama, discovered that he had fathered two children. He went to the king and explained everything about the birth and lineage of the twins. Śaradvān then taught his son the four branches of the *Dhanur Veda* and fully explained the use of all kinds of weapons. Within a short time, Kṛpa became a great teacher, *paramācārya,* of the military art. From him the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the mighty Pāṇḍavas, along with the Vṛṣṇis and other kings who came from many countries, all learned the *Dhanur Veda* and achieved the exalted warrior status of *mahāratha.*

Śrī Vaiśampāyana said:

Bhīṣma sought a distinct excellence for his grandsons and desired for them self-discipline and selflessness. He searched for great teachers of archery and missile warfare renowned for their prowess. Only a man of great intelligence, exalted qualities, keen knowledge of weapons, and the strength and nobility of the gods could hope to control the mighty Kuru warriors and train them in the use of weapons. [That person would be Droṇa, whose story follows.]

Droṇa, Master of The Military Science

It so happened that once the great self-realized sage Bharadvāja happened to be in Hardwar, where the Ganges enters the plains. The illustrious sage, ever strict in his vows, was busy in the work of sacrifice, when he beheld an Apsarā named Ghṛtācī, who had just bathed. Suddenly, a wind blew past, shaking her garments and dragging them away. The girl had been drinking, and the drink made her bold and careless. She stood exposed in all her wonderful youthful beauty. Seeing this, the saintly Bharadvāja spilled his semen, but the wise sage gathered up the spilt seed and placed it in a bucket or pot, and from that vessel the wise Droṇa* took birth. He thoroughly studied all the *Vedas* with their supplements.

Powerful Bharadvāja, the best of the righteous, taught the weapon of fire to the lordly Agni-veśya, who was born on the day of glorification of the fire-god. Agni-veśya then taught the same great weapon, the Āgneya, to Bharadvāja's son, Droṇa.

O best of the Bhāratas, Bharadvāja's friend King Pṛṣata had a son named Drupada, a leader among all the princes. He used to go to Bharadvāja's hermitage, where he would play and study with Droṇa. When Pṛṣata passed away, the mighty-armed Drupada became sovereign king of the North Pāñcāla. The exalted Bharadvāja then ascended to heaven, and the illustrious Droṇa, by his father's command and by his own desire to have a son, took the hand of Kṛpī, daughter of Śaradvān, in sacred marriage.

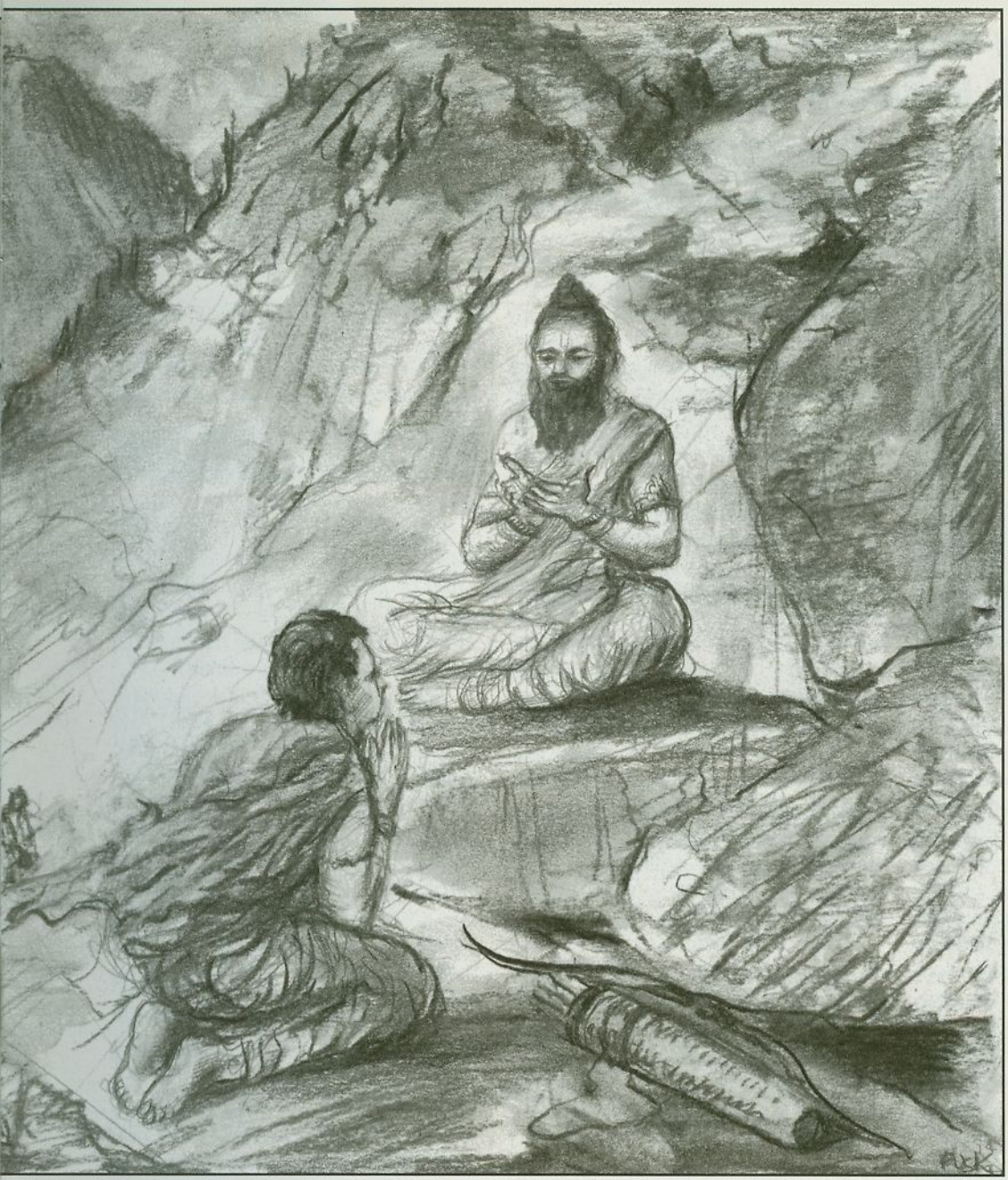
Kṛpī, the granddaughter of Gautama, was always fond of sacrifice, religion, and self-control. Her fate was to obtain Aśvatthāmā as her son. As soon as Aśvatthāmā was born, he sounded forth like Uccaiḥśravā, the celestial stallion. Hearing this sound, an invisible being standing within inner space said, "This child has sent forth his horselike sound in all directions, and therefore his name will be Aśvatthāmā.†"

droṇa: pot, bucket.

†*aśva:* (of a) horse; *sthāman*: strength, neighing (of a horse).

Droṇa Meets Paraśurāma

The learned Droṇa, pleased with his son, stayed where his son was born and devoted himself to the *Dhanur Veda.* Once he heard that the great soul and warrior Paraśurāma, son of Jamadagni, wanted to give all kinds of wealth to the *brāhmaṇas.* Upon learning that Lord Paraśurāma possessed complete mastery of the *Dhanur Veda* and many divine weapons, Droṇa decided to beg them in charity and also to beg for instruction in the political science. Droṇa, the great and mighty-armed ascetic,



Droṇa approaches Lord Paraśurāma to beg from him his divine weapons.

departed, surrounded by his austere disciples, who were fixed in their vows. He headed for the glorious mountain called Mahendra, where Lord Paraśurāma had retired after annihilating the royal class. Approaching Mahendra, the saintly son of Bharadvāja saw Lord Paraśurāma, protector of the *brāhmaṇas,* sitting patiently, his senses fully quieted, having already slain his enemies.

Approaching the Lord, Droṇa, accompanied by his disciples, gave his name, told of his birth in the line of Aṅgirā, and respectfully greeted the Lord by offering his head on the ground at the Lord's lotus feet. Droṇa then said to Lord Paraśurāma, who had retired to that forest, "You may thus know me to be Droṇa, a leader among the *brāhmaṇas.* I have come here seeking financial help."

Lord Paraśurāma said:

My dear ascetic, I have already given the *brāhmaṇas* everything, all my gold and whatever wealth I had. Even the earth goddess herself, to the ends of her oceans, with all her towns and garlands of cities—all of the earth I have given to the sage Kaśyapa. All that I have left now is my body, my invaluable missiles, and various other weapons. You choose, Droṇa. What shall I offer you? Tell me quickly. Choose my weapons or my own body, for I place them at your disposal.

Śrī Droṇa said:

O Bhārgava, you should kindly offer me all of your weapons, with all the secrets related to their use, including the art of pulling them back even after they have been launched.

Śrī Vaiśampāyana said:

"So be it," said Lord Paraśurāma, acting as a *brāhmaṇa* in the line of Bhṛgu. He gave Droṇa all his weapons, with their secret rules, and the entire military science. Accepting all, Droṇa, best of the twice-born, became accomplished in weapons. He then went in great joy to see his dear friend Drupada.

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami led the team of devotee-scholars who completed the translation and commentary of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam *begun by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Fluent in several languages, Hridayananda Dāsa Goswami has extensively taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India, Europe, the United States, and Latin America. He is a member of the Governing Body Commission, the ultimate managing authority of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He is now doing graduate work in Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University.*

As the years go by, we have to realize Kṛṣṇa for ourselves. Because at the time of death everything's finished. You have to know yourself. And your meditation should be on your guru and on Kṛṣṇa.

• • •

MERCY (*continued from page 36*) many ways to preach. You don't have to be a rich man to preach.

Projects And Association

I have several projects I work on. I have a cow program. We started a program at the temple—"Save Mother Cow"—and got people in the community involved in that. We got a cow for the temple. And we care for two cows at our house.

I'm vice president of the Potomac temple and get involved a lot there. I try to take at least one day off a week and just physically go over there and do things, whatever there may be—clean up the trash, or whatever. Fix things, paint things, anything that needs to be done.

I have programs at my house regularly. I try to coordinate the devotee community in the Washington area through regular programs. In the summer, about once a month, we have what we call the Hare Kṛṣṇa Picnic Programs. Devotees come, and everybody brings a preparation, and we have *kīrtana* and *ārati* and some discussion. Then we have *prasādam,* and the kids play some sports outside. In this way we associate with devotees and basically have fun, because as family men we all need to have friends, and our children need to have friends—*everyone* needs friends. So this is a chance for devotee association.

Sometimes devotees get distant, get on the edge. So then they need to feel they've got friends who are devotees, that there *is* a *community* of devotees. We've left full service in the temple atmosphere—we're householders, we've bought a house, we have a job—and it's easy to just kind of fade out.

People can just disappear. First you see them once a month, then once every six months, once every Janmāṣṭamī. So we need that devotee association.

As the years go by, we have to realize Kṛṣṇa for ourselves. Because at the time of death everything's finished. You have to know yourself. And your meditation should be on your guru and on Kṛṣṇa.

When the Senses Are Controlled

And a good wife helps. In the temple you're always supervised, one way or another. You've got to come to the programs. Someone's *watching* you. But when you move out, no one's watching you. But I've learned to watch myself—and my wife watches me. So if your wife is watching you and you're watching yourself, it helps. So many little things—keeping Ekādaśī, going to the temple, chanting, reading... *Dharma-patnī:* the proper function of the wife is to act as a partner in your spiritual life.

In the association of devotees in the *āśrama,* we all keep an eye on one another. But when you're a householder there's nobody watching. So if your wife's in *māyā,* then fifty percent of your protection is gone. She doesn't have to be a pure devotee, but you want her to have at least basic Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That's important.

In the early stages of living outside I went through the stage where I thought, "I can do whatever I want. Nobody's going to yell at me. Nobody's going to know. I can drink, smoke—whatever." There are so many forms of *māyā* out there. But I never did it.

I remember I thought about it once. But then I thought, "That's stupid. Why should I do a thing like that? Look, I've got twenty years here of clean bill of devotion, and why should I give it up just for some flickering happiness?"

"Let your conscience be your guide." When you've trained yourself to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, you're self-controlled. When the senses are controlled, they're like a snake with no fangs—they can't harm you.

A little example: Six or seven years ago I went to El Salvador on a business trip—my father arranged it with a friend's company—to install a generator. There were three other guys, all electricians, and I was going to do the mechanical end. So I had to be with these guys. One was divorced, and the other two weren't married. And all the time they're telling me, "Take a beer. Take a beer." And all the time looking at women, joking with women.

They were constantly throwing *māyā* right in my face. "Here's a beer." And they all wanted to go off to prostitutes. And I would explain, "Well, look, I'm a married man. I have my wife. I don't need that." I didn't want to get into preaching to them. I was just saying, "Don't you know what it is to be moral—you know, be responsible and chaste? Don't you know what it means to be married?" But they were just total animals, just gross.

Luckily we have a temple in El Salvador. So after two days of being with these guys in the hotel, I just said, "I'm going to go stay with my people downtown. I'll meet you at work every day. I'll take a taxi."

I could have gone and done it, and nobody would have known. But my conscience would have known. I would have known in my heart that I had done something horrible, and I couldn't live with myself. So ultimately as you become Kṛṣṇa conscious you develop that self-protection, those warning lights. You can't cheat yourself.

As for the future, when the kids get a little bigger my goal is to return to full-fledged service and retire from business altogether. As long as you have enough money to buy food and a place to stay, that's all you need. Food, shelter, and your plane fare to Māyāpur or Vṛndāvana.

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Who's who and what's what in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? *The Hare Krishna Directory* is now accepting listings for its 1994 edition. For information on personal entries, ads, or project profiles, write: Vaishnava Community Directory, 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby, BC V5J 3G8, Canada. 1992 books available for $10.

Nectar Books—Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Navadvipa-Bhava-Taranga,* ecstatic visions of divine Navadvīpa-Vṛndāvana, $8.00; Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *Prakrita-Rasa-Shata-Duhsini,* heavy warnings about mundane sentimentalism, $4.00; *Radha-Krishna Nectar,* huge anthology of prayers, charts, lists, and transcendental miscellany, $20.00. Send order to Nectar Books, P.O. Box 574, Union City, GA 30291.

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May 3–May 8
Overport

May 11–May 15
Verulam

May 18–May 22
Tongaat

May 31–June 5
Stanger

June 8–June 12
Richards Bay

June 15–June 19
Lotus Park

June 22–June 26
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June 29–July 3
Shallcross

July 6–July 10
Isipingo Rail

For more information, please contact ISKCON Durban at (031) 433328.

Alabama
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Chino Valley:
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Chino Valley, AZ 86323

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To find out about programs in Anaheim Hills, Corona, Cerritos, Diamond Bar, Granada Hills, Laguna Niguel, Long Beach, Redlands, Santa Ana, Simi Valley, and other southern California locations, call Pāvakā Devī Dāsī at (310) 815-9501.

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Damon & Debbie Campbell
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Gatherings

Perhaps the nearest temple is too far away and you wish there were some place closer you could go to. Perhaps you'd like to meet others in your area who are interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

If so, get in touch with the people listed here. They and their friends regularly gather in their homes—or they want to start. They'll be happy to hear from you.

If you'd like to be added to the list, please send your name, city, and phone number to: Gatherings, BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32615, USA.

In each issue we'll add new gatherings and list as many old ones as space allows.

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Keaau:
Mahākṣa Dāsa or
Madhu Kaṇṭha Dāsa
(808) 966-4738

Ninole:
Ādi Karta Dāsa or
Kīrtana Rasa Dāsī
P. O. Box 108
Ninole, HI 96773
(no phone)

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Silver Spring:
Anuttama Dāsa &
Rāma Tulasī Dāsī
(301) 236-4717

Mississippi
Oxford:
Prasannātma Dāsa &
Mālinī Dāsī
(601) 234-8348

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Randolph Schwab
(Raṅga Rañjana Dāsa)
(505) 243-6925

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Rāma Rāghava Dāsa &
Anaṅgalatā Devī Dāsī
(Rakesh & Ana Sharma)
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Belmont:
Kantilal & Sashila Patel
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What is the purpose of the Vedas? To understand Kṛṣṇa. That's all. If you can understand Kṛṣṇa to some extent, all your Vedic studies are finished. No more taking trouble.

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DUTY (*continued from page 8*)
the *Vedas.* This is the Vedic way.

Now, a great sage is giving his conclusion. *Śrutir mātā pṛṣṭā diśati bhavad-ārādhana-vidhim:* "I have inquired from so many Vedic scriptures. Now I conclude that worshiping the Supreme Lord is the only injunction, nothing more."

That is confirmed by *Bhagavad-gītā* also. In the Fifteenth Chapter Kṛṣṇa says, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ.* What is the purpose of the *Vedas*? To understand Kṛṣṇa. That's all. If you can understand Kṛṣṇa to some extent, all your Vedic studies are finished. No more taking trouble.

Now, here the great sage says, "I have consulted all the Vedic processes, all the Vedic literature, and I see that *bhavad-ārādhana-vidhim*—the only injunction is to worship You, the Supreme Lord." And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord confirms, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ:* "By Vedic study one has to understand Me. That's all."

If you try to understand Kṛṣṇa as far as possible through reliable sources, through bona fide sources, then your Vedic study is going on in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān . . .* There is classification of human society. *Śva-paca* means "dog-eaters." There are many animal-eaters, and the dog-eaters are condemned in human society. But the *Bhāgavatam* says, "If a dog-eater vibrates the transcendental sound of God's name, oh, he is glorified." Never mind that previously he was a dog-eater. That doesn't matter. The *Bhāgavatam* confirms this. *Aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān:* "Even the dog-eater becomes glorified." How? *Yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam:* "His tongue is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa." Never mind what he was. That chanting has purified him.

"Oh, how is that? Just a few days ago he was eating dogs. And because he is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, he has become purified?"

At least in Hindu society, people are hesitant to accept this. The reply is, *tepus tapas te:* "In his previous life he has already undergone many severe penances prescribed in your *Vedas.*" *Sasnur āryā:* "Oh, he is not a dog-eater. He belongs to the *ārya,* the advancing Āryan society." These are the injunctions.

Some way or other if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness he becomes purified at once. Never mind what he is. There may be classification in the social convention. He is big, he is small, he's a *brāhmaṇa,* he's a *śūdra* [laborer]. Caitanya Mahāprabhu never says, "I am a *brāhmaṇa,* I am a *kṣatriya* [soldier]." He says, *nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patiḥ:* "I am neither a *brāhmaṇa* nor a *kṣatriya* nor a *vaiśya* [merchant] nor any material designation." Then what are you? *Gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ:* "I am the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa."

That is our transcendental position. As soon as we take to that position, everything is all right. But we have to take it very seriously. That is the meaning of *abhidheya.*

Now, this devotee says, *śruti mātā.* The *Vedas* are called *mātā,* "mother." Why? Because the *Vedas* give the second birth. The first birth is given by the material father, and the second birth is by the spiritual master. The spiritual master is the father, and the *Vedas* are the mother. So a person is called *dvija,* "twice-born," when he goes to the spiritual master and takes lessons from the *Vedas.* The sacred thread ceremony is called *upanayana. Upanayana* means "to bring nearer." *Upa* means "nearer," and *nayana* means "to bring." To take a fallen soul nearer to the Absolute Truth is called *upanayana.* When the spiritual master sees that the disciple is quite competent to come nearer to God, he recognizes him and gives him the sacred thread. Then the disciple is called a *brāhmaṇa.* The sacred thread is the symbol that one has approached an *ācārya,* a spiritual master. How is one understood to know the spiritual science? *Ācāryavān puruṣo veda*—when one has a spiritual master.

I have explained that the Vedic literature is divided into two categories. The original knowledge coming in disciplic succession is the mother. Now the devotee explains in this verse that literature written with reference to the context of Vedic literature is the sister. *Smṛtir api tathā vakti bhaginī.* So one is the mother, and the other is the sister. *Purāṇādyā ye vā sahaja-nivahās te tad-anugā.* The *Purāṇas* are called *smṛti.* The eighteen *Purāṇas,* the *Mahābhārata,* the *Rāmāyaṇa, Vedānta-sūtra*—they are called *smṛti.*

Another devotee of Kṛṣṇa has written a nice song. He says, *śrutim apare smṛtim itare bharatam anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ.* People take shelter of the Vedic literature because they are afraid of conditional life. What is the end of Vedic literature? To get oneself liberated from the material entanglement. So the devotees says, "Let people who are afraid of material entanglement worship *śruti,* the *Vedas,* or *smṛti,* or *Mahābhārata.* Let them engage in that way. I am not going to do that."

"What you are going to do?"

Aham vande iha nandaṁ yasyālinde paraṁ brahma: "I shall worship Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa's father."

"Why? You have given up the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*—everything. Why are you going to worship Nanda Mahārāja?" "Because he has captivated the Supreme Lord, who is playing as a crawling child in his courtyard. Nanda Mahārāja is so great that God is obliged to come to him to play as a child and crawl in his courtyard. So I shall worship Nanda Mahārāja."

So if you approach such a devotee—who can bring God to crawl in his courtyard—that is your perfection.

Thank you very much. ❁

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

Month of Madhusūdana
(April 26–May 25)

MAY

5—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

6—Varūthinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

10—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

13—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for 21 days.

19—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

21—Mohiṇī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

22—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

24—Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

25—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvara Purī, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Trivikrama
(May 26–June 23)

29—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

JUNE

5—Vyāñjulī Mahā-dvādasī. Fasting from grains and beans. Appearance anniversary of Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

19—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda Bhāṣya,* an important commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmiṇī, a prominent woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya.*

20—Trispṛśā Mahā-dvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans (for Bhīma Nirjalā Ekādaśī).

21—Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's chipped-rice-and-yogurt festival at Pāṇihāṭi.

23—Snāna Yātrā, the bathing festival of Lord Jagannātha. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mukunda Datta and Śrīdhara Paṇḍita, two great devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Vāmana
(June 24–July 22)

24—Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, one of the principal followers of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

JULY

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

4—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

9—Guṇḍicā-mārjana, the festival of cleansing the Guṇḍicā temple in Jagannātha Purī, India. Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannātha Purī.

10—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

19—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

22—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

Month of Śrīdhara
(July 23–August 21)

27—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

30—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

This calendar is calculated for Śrīdhām Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. Dates may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Big Time: "The Personal Life Clock"

"Among subduers I am time."—Bhagavad-gītā

by Sārvabhauma Dāsa

MODERN MAN is preoccupied with time. Big time. We race against it. We try to "kill" it. We create unlimited gadgets to save it. We assault it with aerobics and face lifts.

But like a 98-pound nerd who challenges a big prizefighter in his prime, we're in a losing battle. Time is going to beat us till we keel over and puke.

Now the advertising gurus for "The Personal Life Clock" claim their product can help us get a handle on time. Their new electronic clock has an unusual feature: enter your age and sex, and not only will the clock tell the time, but it will calculate how many hours, minutes, and seconds are left in your statistical life—for Americans, seventy-some years.

"It is the most profound number you will ever see," an ad for the clock announces. "By monitoring every precious minute, it arouses the joy of living."

The idea didn't excite bliss in Rebecca McPhail, a writer for the student newspaper at the University of Houston.

"Who could watch the seconds ticking away from their life without getting at least a little jittery?" she writes. "*Aarghh!* I'm down to 432,534 hours, 34 minutes, and 21 seconds—somebody get me a Valium!"

She's got a point. For most people impermanence is a bummer, not a joy.

Like almost everyone in the material world, Ms. McPhail wants to forget time. She advises readers, "Want to really live life to the fullest? Put away your Personal Life Clock, grab a friend and head to the zoo for a day . . . and become so fully absorbed in the beauty of the present moment that the future isn't important."

The zoo? Is that the best advice she can come up with?

Well, if we do visit the zoo we can find an animal there, the noble ostrich, said to hold a philosophy surprisingly akin to Ms. McPhail's. Just as the ostrich is famed for trying to avoid hungry tigers by putting its own head in the sand, most people try to hide their intelligence from the significance of time. Try to ignore time. Maybe it'll go away. But nothing can fend off the tiger of time.

One person who didn't stick his head in the sand was the great king Parīkṣit, who learned five thousand years ago that he only had seven more days to live. What was his response? Did he grab a friend and go to the Delhi zoo? Did he catch a quick flight to Las Vegas?

No. Mahārāja Parīkṣit faced the deadline in full awareness and asked a highly relevant question to the sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

"Please, after proper deliberation, tell me of the unalloyed duty of everyone in all circumstances, and specifically of those who are just about to die. Please let me know what a person should hear, chant, remember, and worship, and also what one should not do."

What we should not do is emulate the reputed behavior of the ostrich and ignore the reality of time, for the deadlines time presents are problems only if we don't properly respond to them. For a fool, time may seem to give only problems, but to a wise person time gives untold opportunities.

For example, let's say a man wins a million dollars in a lottery and must claim his money by Friday noon or lose his fortune. If he claims his prize the Tuesday before, the deadline is no longer a problem. But if he wastes his time at the zoo and forgets about his prize, time is a big problem.

The *Vedas* tell us human life is a rare boon, far superior to winning a lottery. And death is the deadline. Will we claim the prize of self-realization a human birth can afford, or will we die like cats, dogs, or zoo animals, ignorant of the science of self-realization?

To ask questions about solving life's problems is the sign of real intelligence. Why would a seemingly bright college writer be reluctant to confront the problem of time? Because without spiritual vision one cannot realistically face the problems of time and death. Unless we rise to a higher level of consciousness, they're overwhelming. In the face of death, we all must admit our utter frailty and weakness.

If Rebecca McPhail's article is characteristic of present collegiate thinking, it seems that today's educational system is turning out herds of animalistic simpletons more interested in wasting time than in genuine human pursuits.

For human beings serious about using time profitably, Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives King Parīkṣit the way to surmount all material distresses, including the specters of time and death:

"O descendant of King Bharata, one who wishes to be free from all miseries must hear about, glorify, and remember the Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul, the controller, and the savior from all miseries."

Any approach to time short of these activities is a copout, an ostrich approach to reality.

Sārvabhauma Dāsa joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in 1981. He lives in Texas, where he spreads Kṛṣṇa consciousness by selling Śrīla Prabhupada's books.

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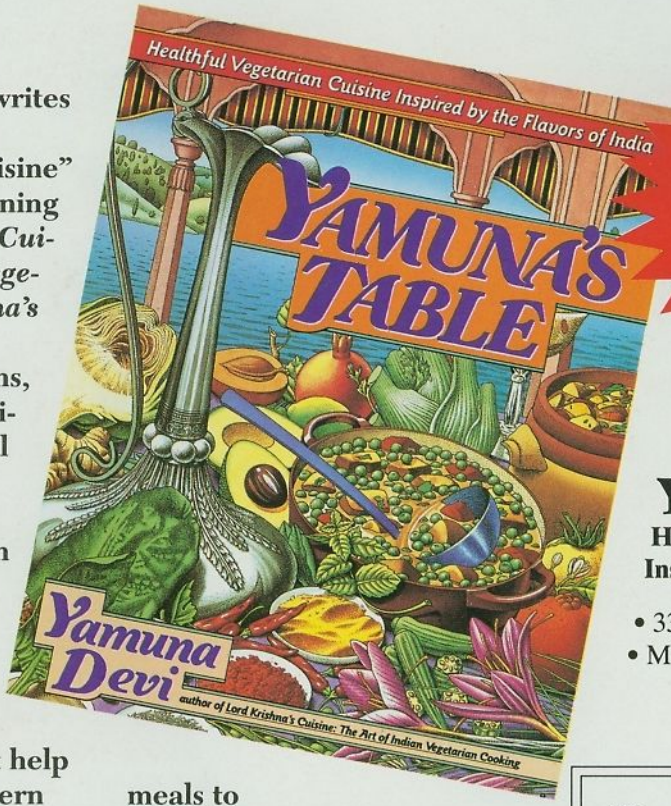

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